PLUG-INS | FILTERS | BRUSHES | PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS | Q&A

Free CD inside

Photoshop® creative

The magazine for Adobe® Photoshop® inspiration and advice

Inside

Improve your skills
Inspired advice and ideas to make you a Photoshop pro

Pixel art
Find out how to get the retro look using the power of pixels

Calligraphy
Learn how to master the art of beautiful lettering

Vintage postcards

- Add film grain to digital prints
- Transform images with antique effects
- Colour black-and-white photos Victorian-style

Get to grips with CS3

Expand your skills with Adobe's latest Photoshop software

47 pages of creative tutorials inside

Creating a digital scrapbook

Give your images impact with innovative collage techniques

Free CD-ROM!

- 165 Inspirational stock photos
- 120 Artistic brushes
- 90 Great textures
- 14 Creative fonts

and much more

eMag

Welcome

A glimpse of what's in store this issue…

Create vintage postcards
page 28

Create retro pixel art
page 52

Mission Statement

Here at *Photoshop Creative*, we promise to always give you the best selection of resources to help improve your Photoshop skills. Whether it's in-depth guides to tools and techniques, or showing how to create a work of digital art, we'll make sure the information you get is accurate and informative. We want you to get the optimum Photoshop experience, and have as much fun using the program as we do putting the magazine together.

Create a digital scrapbook
page 64

Create bespoke web buttons
page 46

If, like us, you're guilty of hoarding old black and white photographs at the back of the cupboard or even new ones on your desktop, then now's the perfect opportunity to put them to good use. This issue we guide you through Photoshop's Dodge and Burn tools and various brushes to create beautiful replicas of vintage postcards. By injecting subtle touches of colour you can give black and white images a whole new lease of life, and you can learn to create the effect well enough to rival hand-tinting techniques of days gone by. Turn to page 28 to give your photos the vintage treatment they deserve.

From antique effects to something far more up-to-date, we've got a great Big Technique on creating bespoke buttons for your website on page 46. Here you'll master how to create convincing gel effects and ensure your web page will never be forgotten. Another thing sure to be memorable is the digital scrapbook you will learn to compile on page 64. Use our fantastic walkthrough to discover how to make any special occasion stand out by creating this type of brilliant collage, full of excellent textures and embellishments.

Also this issue you'll discover how to create your very own retro pixel art on page 52, and on page 16 we take a step back in time to pay tribute to the beautiful art of calligraphy. So what are you waiting for? Turn the page and get stuck in!

Rosie Tanner

Rosie Tanner **Deputy Editor**
rosie.tanner@imagine-publishing.co.uk

CHECK IT OUT! | VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.PSHOPCREATIVE.CO.UK

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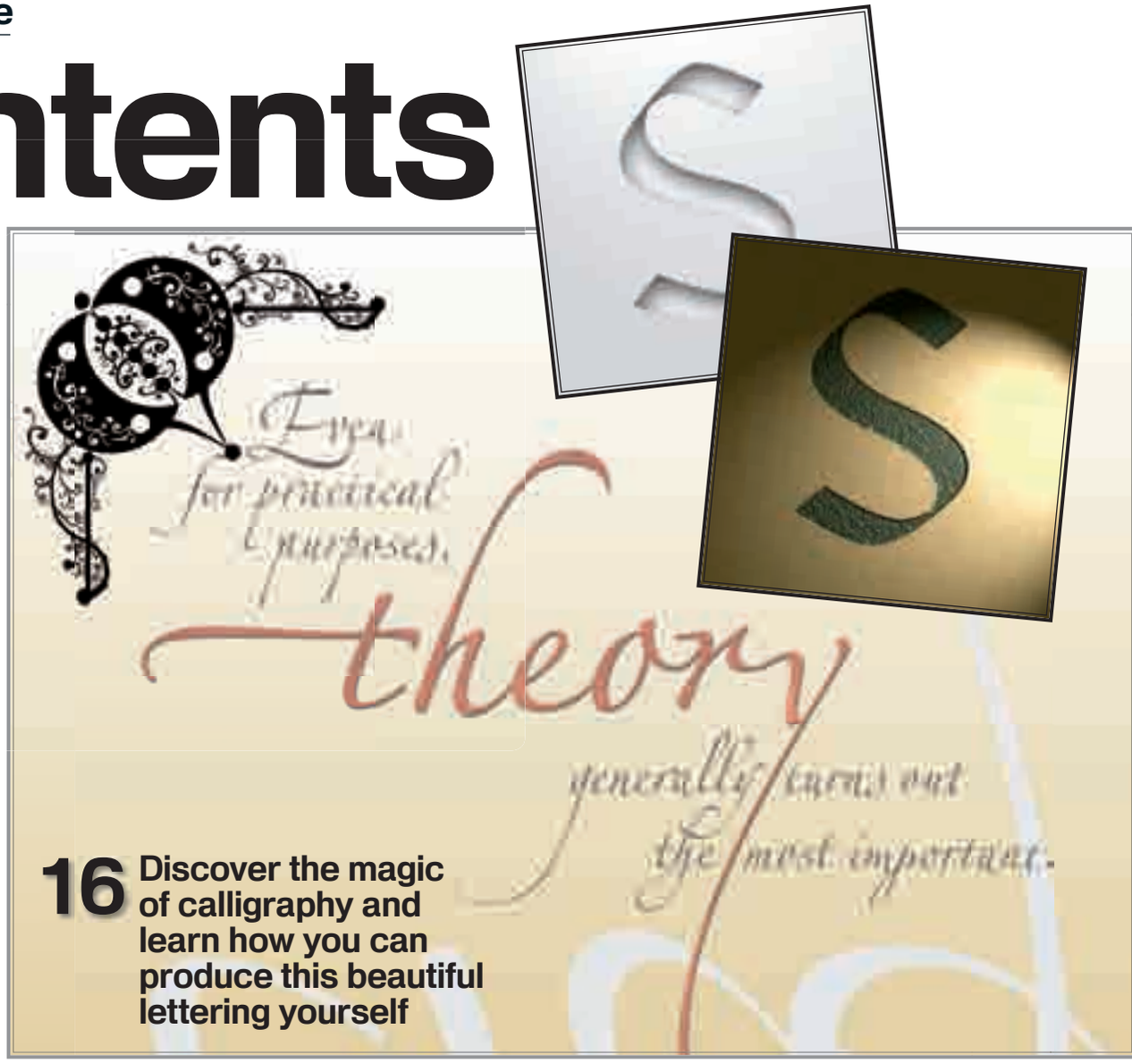

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Creative hub
The latest creative news

Discover the latest news, product releases and goings-on in the world of Photoshop right now

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On the CD
More free resources

Each issue we add loads of exciting resources to our disc. Discover what goodies we have for you this time

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Exhibit
Reader showcase

Find out whether your latest Readers' Challenge entry has made it into the Exhibit pages this issue

Creative Forum

This is the place where you get to share your Photoshop thoughts, troubles and triumphs with fellow readers

Bookazine

Photoshop Creative Collection

I'm new to the magazine and I love it so much that it's really bugging me to know I've missed out on so many past issues. I've been to the online shop, but there are so many to choose from that I'm not sure which to go for. Obviously I'd love to have them all, but I don't think I have time to get through all the tutorials!
Rebecca Olson

Hi Rebecca. It looks like you've found us just in time. We've just launched the *Photoshop Creative Collection*, which sounds like a perfect solution to your problem. This chunky bookazine covers all the best bits from issue nine upwards, meaning you can catch up with the rest of the *Photoshop Creative* readers in one fowl swoop – genius!

Pop over to our eShop at **www.imagineshop.co.uk** in order to purchase your copy.

The Photoshop Creative Collection *has arrived – perfect if you want the best bits of* Photoshop Creative *in one juicy hit!*

Guiding light

I'd just like to let you know how much of a help and inspiration I find your magazine. The tutorials are a pleasure to work through and I've found they've opened up many creative avenues for me.

Here's an example of what I've been able to produce by using the Dramatic Mosaics tutorial in issue 18. I created the mosaic effect from my holiday photos in St Bees. The lighthouse is close to St Bees and you can see it from the beach. I think it works well and people have commented when they've walked past this picture in my hallway. Thanks again, the magazine is such a help – if only I'd discovered it earlier!
Steven Wilson

It's good to see examples of readers having a go themselves, and we're especially impressed with your mosaic creation, Steven. It looks like you've really nailed that mosaic technique, and what a great way to use your holiday snaps!

Fear not about only just discovering *Photoshop Creative* – you can get issues 1-12 on our eMag available from **www.imagineshop.co.uk**.

Far away but not forgotten

I live in the US and don't receive your magazine until a month or so after it comes out. The challenges always look really good, but there's no point me entering them because by the time I get the magazine a new issue is out already. Is there any way to download the image files online for the Readers' Challenge so I can get my entry finished in time? Thanks
John Skipton

John, your letter isn't the first we've had on the subject. In actual fact, we don't put a closing date on any of the Readers' Challenge competitions, for this very reason. A very large proportion of our readers are from the States, so we keep the competition open to give everybody a chance to enter. So now you know that every entry counts, send us your creations right away!

Steven Wilson created this striking mosaic effect of St Bees lighthouse from holiday snaps

View from the forum

User: littleredman
Topic: Commissions
If you were commissioned by a company/client to produce a piece of work – graphic design, moving image, etc, would you expect to hand over all your raw development files as well as the final piece, assuming no contract was written up?

User: revjessecuster
Topic: Re Commissions
Every time I've done work for a client I've given them everything, but as this is usually just a picture I send a compressed jpeg version as well as the original psd/tiff.

User: Medley
Topic: Re Commissions
As rev states, I rarely have a use for images I've been commissioned to take, so normally turn them over.

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eMag

Creative hub

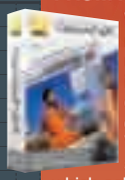
The latest news stories for the Photoshop community

What's hot this month

GET INSPIRED

Fancy getting your name known worldwide? Look no further than the D&AD Global Awards. Tony Davidson, D&AD President explains: "The great thing about D&AD is the range of work you see – judging at the D&AD Global Awards is inspiring." Judging started in March, and we'll have the winners for you next month.

NEWS FROM NIKON



Word has reached us of the imminent cancellation of Nikon View Pro software, which celebrated its first birthday in Feb. Nikon camera owners needn't fear, as it's announced the Capture NX1.1 update, compatible with Windows Vista and Mac OS X. The update is faster and more effective than its predecessor.

WITH CONFIDENCE

Colour Confidence has announced the extension of its distribution agreement with Pantone, making it your first stop for the new hueyPRO. Hitting shelves from April, the product will be priced at £85 and will be available from **www.colourconfidence.com** and ColorStore network as well as selected resellers.

TOP STORY: PHOTOSHOP CS3

Two for one

Adobe announces second version of Photoshop CS3

By now, you're well aware of Photoshop CS3 and all it has to offer. After downloading the beta and getting to grips with the new features, CS3 is old news (well, almost).

Never one to rest for long though, Adobe has announced yet another version of its flagship image-editing app: Photoshop CS3 Extended.

A completely new edition, Extended will feature capabilities for integration of 3D and motion graphics to further enhance Adobe's relationship with the film and medical industries. John Loiacono, senior vice president of Creative Solutions Business Unit explains: "We never imagined that Photoshop would some day help make major motion pictures, let alone save lives. Whether it's a video producer texture-editing the backdrop of a movie or a researcher counting hundreds of cancer cells, diverse industries are already relying on the professional standard in digital imaging."

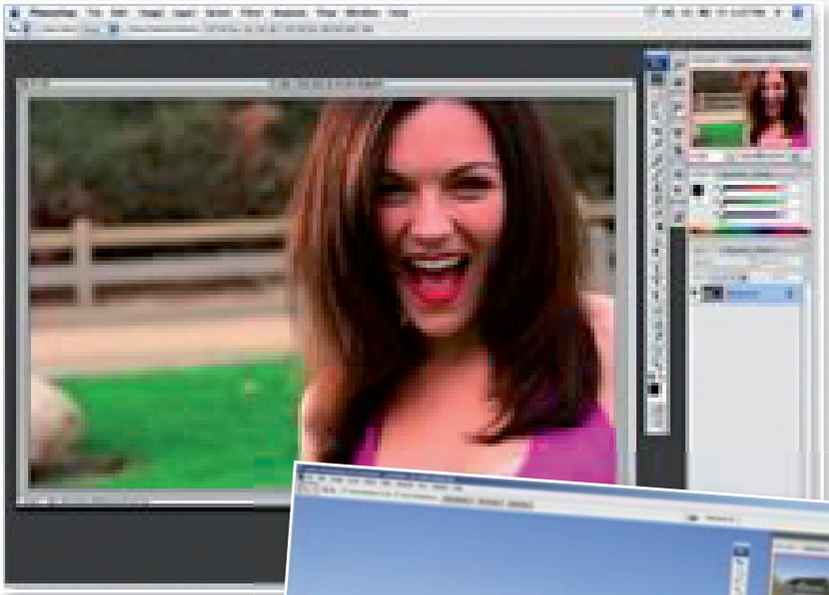
As well as introducing features for 3D, Extended also sees the introduction of capabilities for image measurement and analysis, simplifying workflow for professionals in many areas including architecture, engineering, medical and science.

With this announcement, Adobe is challenging the boundaries of what was once believed to make up a 'creative professional', allowing people to push boundaries and bend rules. Film and video specialists can perform 3D model visualisation and texture editing, paint and clone over multiple video frames, while animators can render and incorporate 3D content into their 2D compositions.

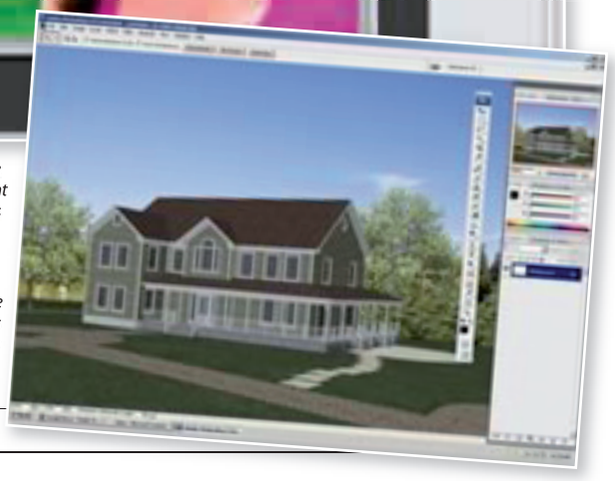
"The National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP) is over 60,000 members strong, and as it continues to grow, so do the variety of uses for Photoshop," said Scott Kelby, president of NAPP. "Photoshop CS3 Extended will further redefine who the 'creative professional' is."

For more information, visit the site at **www.adobe.com/go/photoshop**.

Adobe announces the happy news that an Extended version of CS3 is also on the way



Video specialists can take advantage of CS3's extended capabilities to paint and clone over multiple video frames



Now Photoshop has a use for professionals such as architects and engineers as well as your usual creatives

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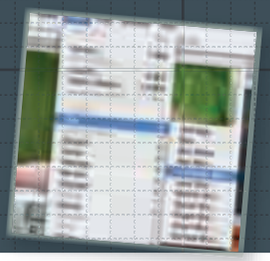
Adobe Photoshop A-Z

A special series working through the best features of Photoshop



G IS FOR GAUSSIAN BLUR
The odds are great that you have used one of the Blur filters in order to soften parts of an image or an entire image. These tools are absolutely perfect for retouching work, because they smooth hard lines and are also easy to control. The term 'Gaussian' refers to the bell-shaped curve that is generated when Photoshop applies a weighted average to the pixels.

As easy as A B C

Create, upload and share in one easy step thanks to izimi

If you've ever dreamt of becoming a full-time Photoshop artist, you'll know how important it can be to get your work seen by the right people. However, unless your Photoshop skills are combined with impeccable web-based skills, getting your images onto a site can be a nightmare.

izimi is a desktop app that enables users to serve files direct to the net with just a URL. Available to download free at **www.izimi.com**, it lets users publish and serve files (photos, documents, music, videos – in fact, anything at all) from their PC to anyone with a web browser. And the best news is there are no restrictions on file size, type or quality.

"The internet is a rapidly changing space, and izimi is the next logical step by enabling users to easily share all types of content with anyone with a web browser," says Marc Lyne, CEO of izimi. "Using izimi, people are able to control their own media without relying on external servers. izimi is right on the curve of this fundamental change of empowering users to self-publish and manage their own content without needing any technical know-how."

For more info or to sign up for a free izimi download, visit **www.izimi.com**.

izimi enables you to be captain of your ship

NEW STOCK SITE

FLYING HIGH

Stock site from aerial wonder, Jason Hawkes, is launched

If you're sick of looking on the same old stock sites to find source images, this launch will be music to your ears.

Featuring a unique collection of shots from renowned photographer Jason Hawkes, the site focuses on aerial images. Numbering over 10,000 shots, they can be searched using location or generic keywords.

Hawkes has specialised in aerial photography since 1991 and produced over 25 books. "While other sites might include famous locations shot from the air," he explains, "this collection goes way beyond that and includes thousands of aerial views that are location unspecific but visually very graphic. The fact that the shots could have been taken anywhere in the country makes them extremely versatile. I shoot from helicopters, and always with the door off, harnessed to a hard point in the helicopter."

Visually intriguing – go to www.jasonhawkes.com

As a niche collection, the images will attract buyers looking for something special. The images are available for Rights Managed (RM) licensing as 100MB Tiffs or higher.

EXPOSURE

Get your work seen

THE ILLUSTRATION SOURCE
www.illustration-source.com
This one-stop shop for all Photoshop needs is also perfect for hanging your virtual portfolio. Whether you want to submit work or buy stock photography, The Illustration Source is the place to go. Its free filters and plug-ins also means less scavenging the net for what you're after.

CREATIVE POOL
www.creativepool.co.uk
You might be a great digital artist, but unless you are able to get your work seen by the right people – how is anybody going to know? Creative Pool is an online portfolio job site which allows you to upload your CV and images so that the work can find you, instead of you having to go out and chase it up.

Updates... THIS MONTH IN SHORT

New additions to the world of Photoshop

Akvis Retoucher 2.5

Akvis Retoucher 2.5 has hit the virtual shelves, and the latest version of this photo restoration plug-in is compatible with both Photoshop CS3 and Windows Vista. Visit the website (**www.akvis.com**) to buy the plug-in new or upgrade your existing version for free.

Mask Pro 4.1 beta

Get your mitts on the newest software before it's even available, by trying out onOne's Mask Pro 4.1 beta. Available from **http://labs.ononesoftware.com/** alongside the betas for Genuine Fractals 5 and PhotoFrame Pro 3.1, you can let the developers know what you think and get a say in how the final product works.

ALERT! | DON'T FORGET TO ENTER OUR READERS' CHALLENGE – SEE PAGE 98

Make a date

At a loose end? Here are the must-see events this month

26-29 APRIL
INT FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE FOR NEW TECHNOLOGY
At the Downing College and The Junction, Cambridge, this event will explore making and experiencing new technology arts. **www.enternet.org.uk**

21-22 APRIL
MAINSAIL ARTS FESTIVAL
A two-day exposition for artists, this event is held in Vinoy Waterfront Park, Florida. Featuring a wide variety of contemporary arts and crafts, the festival also has children's activities and live entertainment.

16 APRIL
OPEN PORTFOLIO – A SHOWCASE FOR ILLUSTRATORS AND ARTISTS
Held at The Prince's Drawing School, London, Open Portfolio is designed for illustrators starting their career and those with experience looking for new business. **www.theaoi.com**

Two of the best… PLUG-IN SITES

Sketch Pad
www.sketchpad.net

Available for both Mac and PC, Sketch Pad offers you far more than just free fonts – there's Photoshop, Illustrator tutorials and much more besides. Under the Fonts section you will find the site easily searchable via the alphabet, and the fonts are all clearly listed and illustrated.

GetFreeFonts
www.getfreefonts.com

This website does exactly what it says on the tin – it provides you with free fonts. Separated into sub-divisions including Famous, Script and Gothic fonts, if you know the style of typeface that you're after, you'll find this site a breeze. Simply log on to www.getfreefonts.com and feast your eyes on all the fabulous freebies before you.

PLUG-INS

Let there be light!

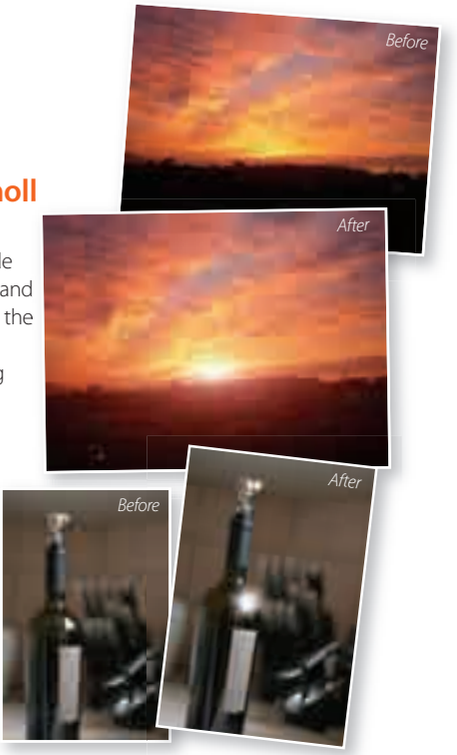
Fake it with ease with this new plug-in developed by John Knoll

Developed by John Knoll, Digital Anarchy introduced Knoll Light Factory 3.0 to the world at the PMA (Photo Marketing Association) show this year.

The plug-in generates flares to enhance natural or man-made lighting in photographs with little effort required from the user, and this latest version has better features for improved composition and more realistic results. Also boasting an improved interface, Knoll Light Factory simulates the reflections and refractions of a bright light source seen through the lens of a camera, all with a click of a mouse in Photoshop. If you want to create something more hyper-realistic then the colour, scale and intensity of the flares are all entirely under your command. With over a hundred pre-made flares – including halos from street lights and the sun – you're sure to be able to create the look you want.

Digital Anarchy is dedicated to creating quality creative software for broadcast designers, animators and professional photographers. These tools solve a wide range of design issues, from creating text effects and background design elements to masking out bluescreens for commercial photography.

To find out more about Knoll Light Factory or any of Digital Anarchy's other products, visit the website at www.digitalanarchy.com.



TRAINING **Get to grips with this piece of kit**

Lightroom training with Lynda

Readers wanting to hone their skills in Adobe's newly released Lightroom can visit Lynda.com for over six hours of essential training and tutorials.

Photoshop Lightroom is a powerful new photographic workflow application designed to help photographers expand their creative potential, and this new training module explores using this revolutionary new tool to its full potential.

"I am really excited about teaching Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, because it's a revolutionary tool that empowers photographers to become more effective and creative. Lightroom expands my creative potential with its powerful RAW processing capabilities, which are non-destructive. Since I started using Lightroom, my workflow has become streamlined, which has helped me rediscover my passion for the essentials of photography," comments Lynda Weinman, CEO of lynda.com.

In order to access this essential resource, all you need to do is subscribe to http://lynda.com for around $25 (£15) a month.

Brush up your Lightroom skills with more than six hours of online training

The team's wish list

Pure material delight…

Monster Pod

The most portable tripod we've ever seen – and a great use of what looks a lot like Playdoh…

We want it because…

Taking our own source images can become a bit of a problem. Often abstract images or those in hard to reach places can be given up on. But fear no more, because the Monster Pod allows you to simply screw your compact onto the swivel head and slap wherever you like. From trees and rocks to skis and ceilings – you need never again miss that shot!

TALK TO US! | SEND NEWS STORIES TO PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

THE STORY BEHIND...

Kapitza

Pretty and practical – Kapitza created versatile sticker sheets so their designs can be applied to a range of surfaces

Sisters Nicole and Petra Kapitza use Photoshop to create their stunning designs. Find out why the creative combo are so good together here…

Kapitza's top five tips to become a digital pro

01 Dare to be different

02 Keep doing what you do and don't let others discourage you

03 Innovate, don't imitate

04 Tell people about your work, don't wait for them to discover you

05 Above all, love your work!

Design duo Nicole and Petra share more than a family tie. As two of Europe's edgiest creatives, this sister act knows how to deliver on the design front…

How did you both get into design?

Petra: I always knew I'd like a creative job but wasn't sure what it would be. After experimenting with fashion design, I decided on graphic design as I really enjoy working on a Mac and love experimenting with software packages.

Nicole: In my early teens I drew portraits of pop stars. Then I did A Level in arts and went on to study illustration. I got into typography later, when computers were introduced at university. I was fascinated, and it took my work in a new direction when I landed a job at the most prestigious new media agency in Germany.

What's the aim of Kapitza?

Our main aim is to create stunning, original work that others can enjoy. We're really driven to continually come up with exciting, timeless design solutions. Another factor is our drive to support other women in the industry. Being female, we know how difficult it can be to get the recognition you deserve, so we work hard to try and change these old-fashioned practices. Finally, we strive to provide clients with solutions they can identify with and be proud of. If you can't do this, you're not doing your job properly.

How does working in partnership strengthen your creativity compared to working on solo projects?

Working together is great. We're on the same wavelength and are frequently inspired by each other's work. It's great to have someone to bounce ideas off, and by doing this we can really move forward and create something brilliant. We push each other further than we would if we were each working on our own, but at the same time there's less pressure on the individual.

Where do you find inspiration?

Our surroundings play a huge role. Many of our ideas spring from nature, but living in London also provides endless sources of inspiration. On a practical level, software acts as a springboard for ideas to develop. The features in Photoshop, Illustrator and Fontlab inspire us to experiment.

Tell us about your latest project

We've just released POP, a pattern font in four different weights. We worked on it for six months and were fascinated and surprised at the number of things you can do with it. We've also just finished work on an identity project for the solar company Sonnenzentrum, which we're proud of.

What defines your work and why?

We strive for a clean, minimalist style because we believe it overcomes fashion and becomes a timeless piece of design. We want our work to be the best solution for that particular project without being influenced by a certain style.

What do you find most challenging?

We love the design aspect of our work, but find managing and running a studio a real chore. Time management is a challenge, and finding time for self-initiated projects and balancing client work is often quite difficult to juggle. Basically anything that isn't design is a challenge!

What feature couldn't you live without in Photoshop and why?

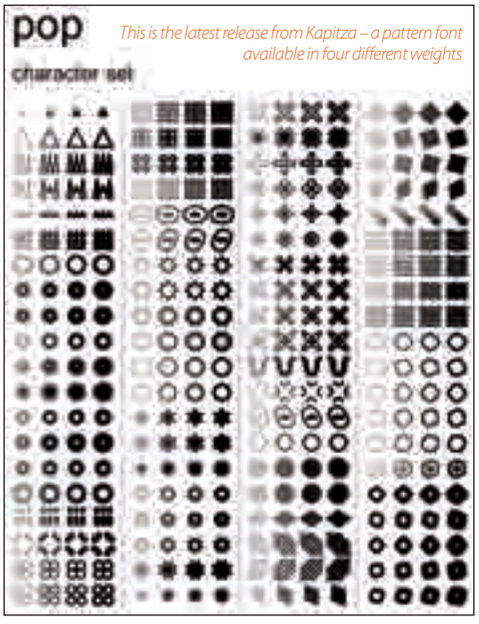
We love layers! Experimenting would be impossible without them. The possibilities in Photoshop are endless, and no doubt they'll keep on growing.

What advice do you have for a digital artist setting up their own business?

Find time to do self-initiated projects – doing this will keep your work fresh. You also need to be prepared to spend a lot of time managing your business and not being creative. Unfortunately that's the name of the game if you're self-employed.

What does the future hold for Kapitza?

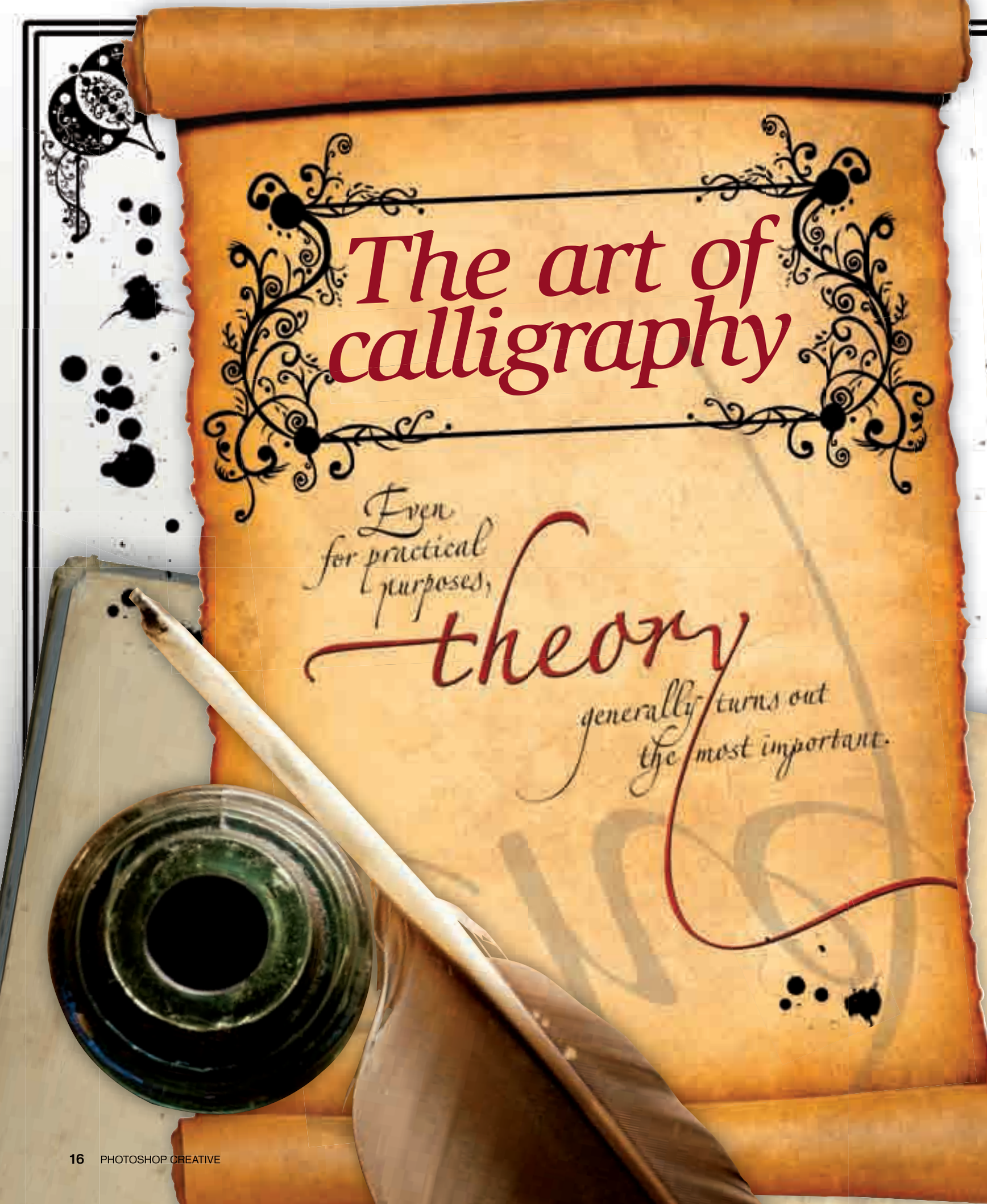
Apart from client work, we're planning to take our fonts into the third dimension and introduce physical products into our shop, starting with Blossomy stickers to be used as wall tattoos and to style other objects.



This is the latest release from Kapitza – a pattern font available in four different weights

All images courtesy of Kapitza

WEB | SEE MORE OF KAPITZA'S WORK AT WWW.KAPITZA.COM OR BUY IMAGES FROM HTTP://KAPITZA.COM/SHOP


The art of calligraphy
Even for practical purposes,
theory
generally turns out the most important.

Expressive handwritten lettering can turn a mundane project into something beautiful. Here's how to create and manipulate it

Calligraphy literally means 'beautiful writing'. You've probably tried it at some time in your life using one of those pen-and-ink kits from stationery shops. But on the computer, with all sorts of fonts available at the click of a mouse, it's easy to forget the human touch.

Thanks to Photoshop's Calligraphic Brushes, it's quite possible to draw lettering straight onto the screen. For obvious reasons, a mouse is not the ideal tool for this, although you can certainly try it. To get serious, you'll need a graphics tablet. We used a Wacom Intuos3 A5 Wide, which is ideal for calligraphy: it's large enough to allow sweeping strokes, and its shape suits lines of text as well as matching the latest widescreen monitors. The A5 Wide supports both Macs and PCs (including Windows Vista), and costs around £300 including a copy of Corel's Painter Essentials 2, which gives you even more creative tools to play with. If you can't stretch to this, there are plenty of smaller tablets to choose from.

There are many benefits to doing your calligraphy digitally – Undo being the most obvious. It's also handy that you don't have to work at actual size. By adjusting the zoom level in Photoshop, you could use your tablet's whole area to draw a character that you'll print an inch high. As you'll see, there are also endless ways to manipulate your lettering to polish your compositions or add special effects.

Clear and sharp

It's important to work at a decent resolution so that your lettering will look clear and sharp (see step 1, page 19). The only limitation is that at very large sizes, Photoshop's brushes may not be able to keep up with your hand. You'll then have to try writing more slowly or reducing the brush size.

Calligraphy does take time and effort to master, but there are several shortcuts to convincing results. A trick as simple as holding the Shift key to keep your vertical strokes straight (see step 7, page 19) can work wonders. And although it goes against the grain of hand-crafted lettering, there's nothing to stop you reusing your one perfect 'g' as many times as you like.

> "Calligraphy takes time and effort to master, but there are several shortcuts to convincing results. Simply holding Shift to keep vertical strokes straight can work wonders"

While the design for a set of typeset characters is called a typeface or font, in calligraphy it's a 'hand'. The traditional starting point is to learn a simple 'foundational hand', and we introduce this on page 19. Tracing over ready-made lettering is also a great way to learn. Set some type using Photoshop's Text tool, reduce its opacity in the Layers palette, then write over it in a new layer.

Of course, if you really don't think that you have the time, motivation or talent to draw your own lettering, another option is to use a calligraphic font. Thanks to OpenType, a font such as Adobe's Caflisch Script can produce a handwritten look by automatically substituting different versions of each character wherever it occurs. Add some tweaks of your own, and this is a perfectly valid way to generate lettering.

Brushes are your main calligraphic tool in Photoshop. Despite the name, they include equivalents of pen nibs as well as many other drawing implements.

But why not take up the challenge and do it yourself? Just as with a real pen and paper, the first step is to set up a grid to guide your strokes. Most important are the two horizontal lines that define your 'x-height': the height of characters such as 'a', 'c' and 'o'. Ascenders (for example on 'b' and 'd') and descenders ('g', 'j' and so on) will protrude a certain distance beyond this, as will capital letters. It makes sense to relate the x-height to the width of the nib you're using – for example, a foundational hand conventionally has an x-height of four-and-a-half nibs, although either four or five is equally good.

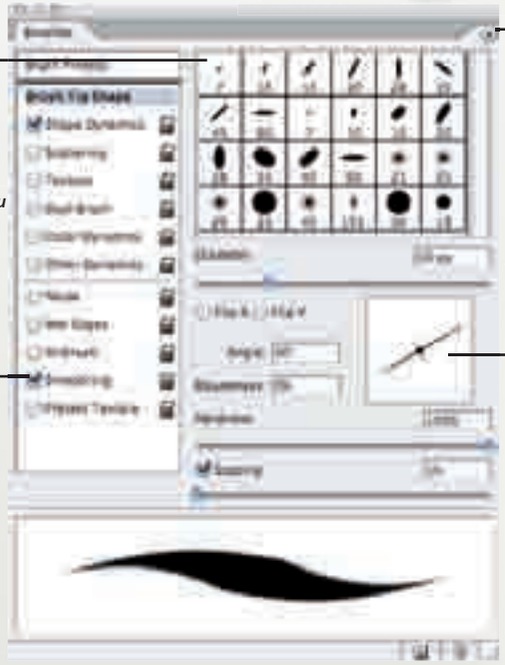
What's in a name?

The alphabets referred to as 'upper case' and 'lower case' in typography (after the boxes in which the letters were kept) are known to calligraphers as 'majuscule' and 'minuscule'. Majuscules are much harder to get to grips with, because they involve so many different shapes, and you'll soon appreciate why ancient manuscripts are written mostly in minuscule! But as you get more confident, you can have the most fun adding 'swash' flourishes to your capital letters.

On the following pages you'll set up some practice with a foundational hand, see how calligraphy can be formal or casual, learn how to distort and transform selected lettering to vary the end result, and see how Photoshop's styles, effects and filters can add impact to your work. Just don't blame us if your notes to the milkman are never the same again…

Brushes palette

How to make the most of it



Click one of these thumbnails in order to select a brush tip. Its properties are then shown below, where you can adjust them.

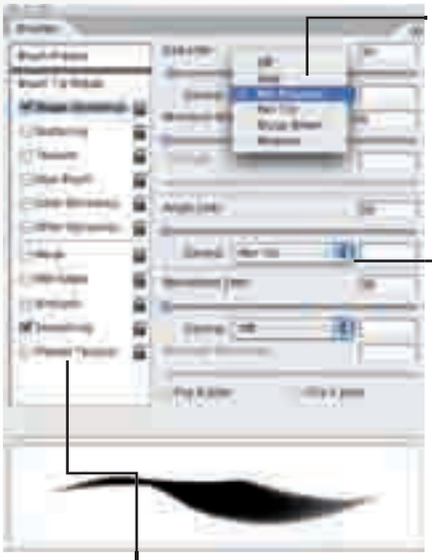
Use the Brushes palette to choose and customise your nib. Start by popping up to the menu at the top right and loading the Calligraphic brush tips.

All these options add variation to your strokes for more natural results. You can leave them turned off for conventional calligraphy.

Nib angle is crucial for calligraphy. Set it between 30 and 45 degrees. Unlike with a real pen, you won't have to worry about maintaining a constant angle – Photoshop does that for you, unless you specify otherwise.

Tool dynamics

Use the properties of your tools to your best advantage



If you select a Control, the property shown will respond to the way you use your graphics tablet's pen. Connect Size to Pressure, and pressing harder will make a thicker stroke. Some tablets also detect Tilt.

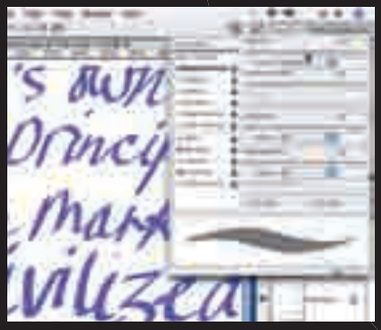
The Jitter options introduce random variation, regardless of your input. As you draw a stroke, any property with Jitter will vary continuously.

The Smoothing option irons out some of the wiggles produced by an unsteady hand. For good results though, you'll need to develop the ability to make confident, regular strokes. At least you can undo the ones that don't come off!

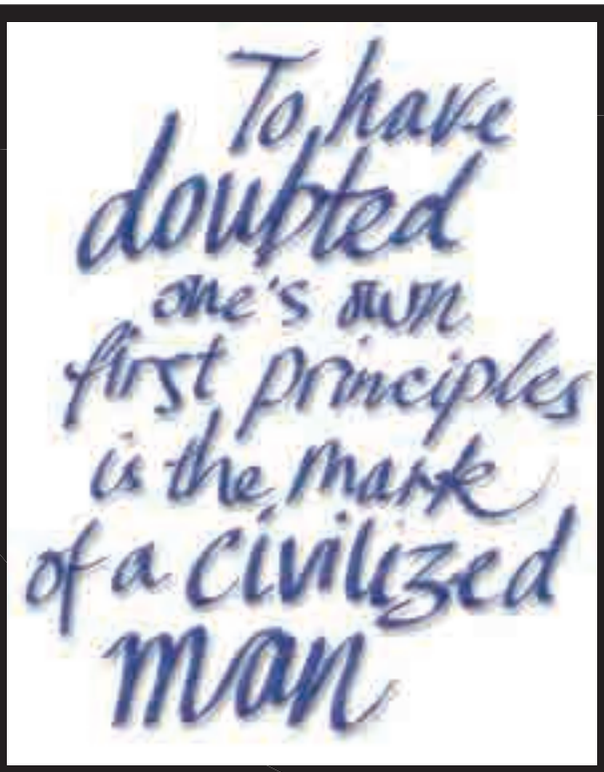
Informal calligraphy styles

Formal calligraphy comes in many different varieties, including the foundational hand, the 'uncial' seen in manuscripts from the Dark Ages, blackletter or Gothic script (sometimes wrongly called 'Old English'), and the 'copperplate' handwriting style taught from the 18th Century onwards.

But calligraphy doesn't always have to be formal: it can also be much more liberated, personal and fun. Graffiti lettering, for example, is a form of calligraphy, and often even mimics the thick and thin strokes created by a broad nib. You can also try your hand at the kind of florid lettering popular in the Victorian period, with lots of over-the-top flourishes. (You'll need a narrower nib for this.) Or, as you'll see later, why not combine them both for baroque graffiti? As well as experimenting with the way you write, play with Photoshop's Brush settings to get different looks. Options such as Wet Edges and Shape and Color Dynamics will give your lettering more variation and movement.



Increase Size Jitter to make the stroke width vary randomly, giving the stroke a distressed look.



(Above) You can also use Foreground/Background Jitter and Hue Jitter, in Color Dynamics, to create effects that would be impossible with a real pen and ink.

(Left) To control stroke width by pressing harder on your tablet pen, tick Shape Dynamics and click to edit the settings. Choose Pen Pressure (or try Tilt), but turn all other options off.

Using grids and guides to create formal typography

They will give you just the sort of help you need

01 Start on a transparent layer Run Photoshop and create a new document, choosing the A4 preset. This gives a full page at 300dpi resolution, allowing high-quality colour printing. If you need really crisp black text, you could switch the Color mode to Greyscale and use 600 or even 1200dpi. When your blank page appears, hit Apple+Shift+N to make a new layer.

02 Set up a grid Use a grid to guide you, based on an x-height of four nibs. Go to Preferences>Guides, Grids & Slices. Under Grid, set Style to Lines. We'll make our nib a twelfth of an inch wide, or 25 pixels. Multiplying this by the x-height, enter 100 into the box labelled 'Set Gridline every' (use the pop-up to change the units to pixels). Set Subdivisions to 4.

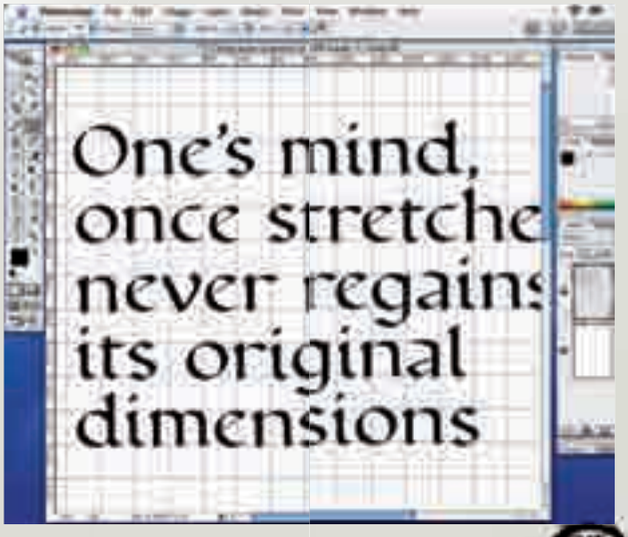
03 Configure the Brush tool Click the fourth icon on the right in the toolbox and choose the Brush tool. In the Options bar, set Mode to Normal, and Opacity and Flow to 100%. At the far right, click the menu icon to open the Brushes palette. Click the triangle to the right of its name to pop up a menu, and choose Calligraphic Brushes. Hit OK to show these alone.

04 Get ready to write Choose the brush tip marked '28'. Untick all options on the left except Smoothing, then click on Brush Tip Shape. Using the controls on the right, adjust the Diameter to 25 pixels and Angle to 30 degrees. Spacing should be ticked and set to 1%. Press Apple-' (apostrophe) to display your grid, and use Apple-+ to zoom in: try 100 or 200%.

05 Start with an 'o' Click the swatch at the foot of the toolbox to set the foreground colour, or hit D for black. Using the mouse or tablet pen, place the cursor left of centre on the top line of a 4 x 4 grid square. The cursor shows the shape of the nib (if not, go to Preferences>Display & Cursors>Normal Brush Tip). Click-drag to draw a semicircle anticlockwise.

06 Progress to a 'c' Draw the opposite semicircle to complete an 'o'. It'll take several attempts, using Apple+Z to undo. Using a tablet, try to hold the pen with a normal writing grip; you may need to disable any side buttons to avoid pressing them. Make confident strokes – going slowly will give you wobbly lines. Now try a 'c', with the second stroke shorter.

07 Add vertical strokes Construct more letters by combining these shapes with vertical strokes. To make serifs, start in the centre of a square and curve your stroke down onto the gridline at the right. Stop, hold Shift, then draw the vertical. At the bottom, release Shift and add a flick to the right. Then go back and add a short stroke at the top to form a point.



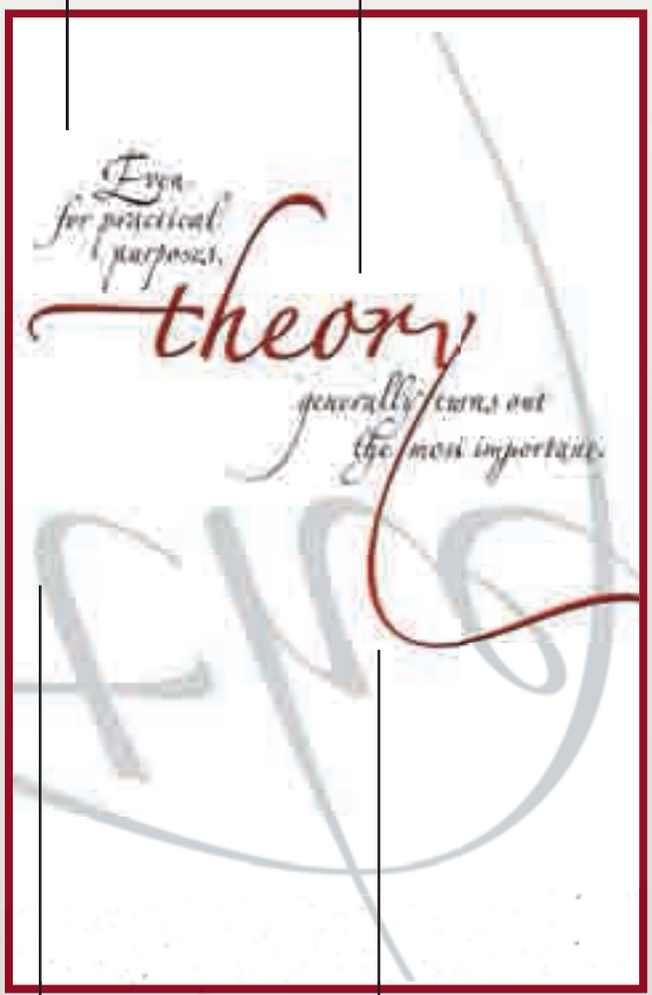
08 Continue through the alphabet Take the ascenders and descenders two gridlines beyond your x-height, but when you come to write majuscules, make them only one to one-and-a-half squares higher. We don't have room to take you through a whole alphabet here, but you can find lots of calligraphy tutorials via Google: a good one is at http://vaxxine.com/mikwit/lessons/lesson3.htm.

Fancy flair

Effective calligraphy relies on a certain degree of flair by the artist for it to create an impact. Use these distortion techniques to add personality to your characters.

By lassoing words and cutting them into new layers (see step 3, page 21) you can rearrange your composition freely, even overlapping letters that were drawn apart.

Avoid scaling lettering up too much, as quality will suffer, but you could write all your text large and then scale parts down to create variety.

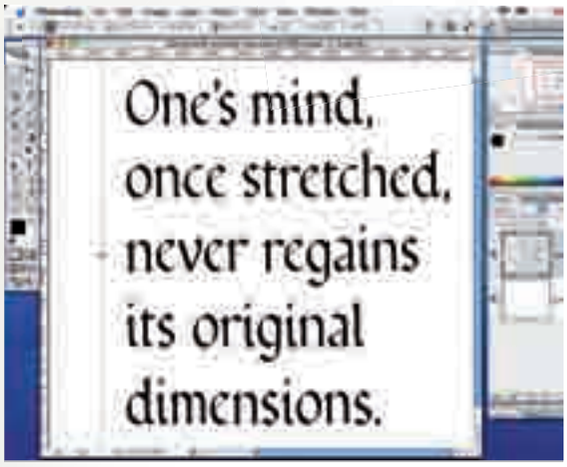


Enlarge, flip and rotate one or more copies of your text as background graphics to give your composition extra depth and texture.

Isolate individual characters and distort them to exaggerate flourishes. If you're careful, you can even select part of a character and distort it without affecting the point where it connects to the rest.

Distorting and transforming text

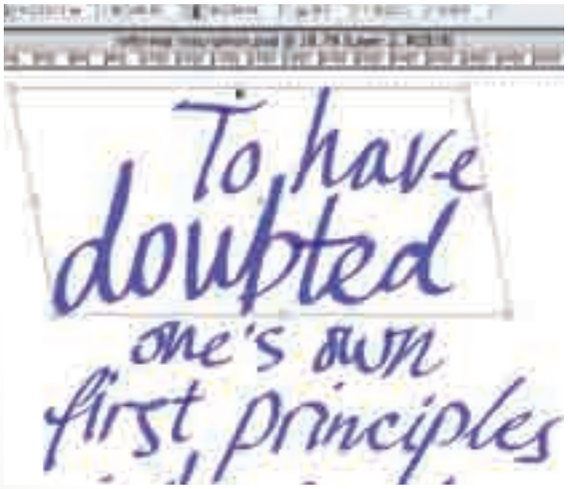
Here's where you can get really imaginative



01 Creative scaling

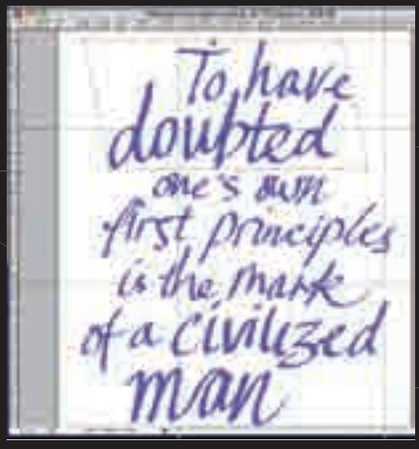
Using Photoshop's Transform tools can help you knock your composition into shape without having to redo work at a different shape or size. At the simplest, press V for the Move tool to show a bounding box around the calligraphy layer. Drag any handle to scale it; here we've moved a side handle to narrow the lettering.

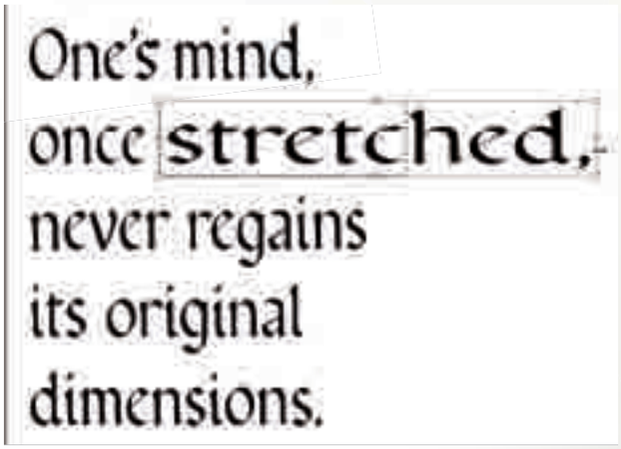
04 Skew Press Apple+T to transform. To skew the letters, hold the Apple key while dragging the top handle left or right. The mouse cursor shows a grey arrowhead to confirm you've activated Skew. Hold Shift to prevent vertical movement, keeping the text the same height – or enter a value into the H box in the Options bar. To make straight text look italic, try 11 degrees.



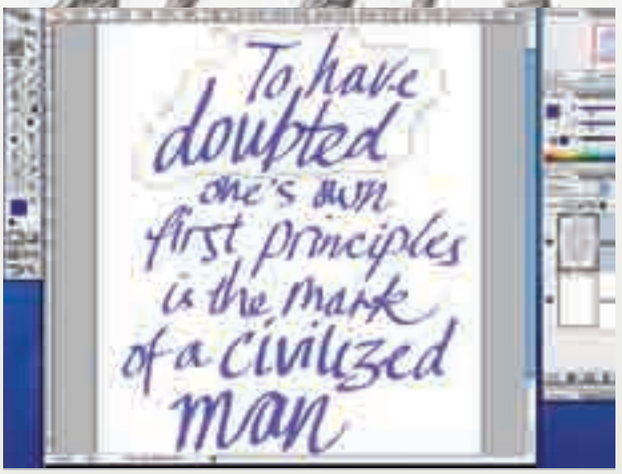
Warp tool

As well as the basic transformation options, try using the Warp mode. Press Apple+T for Transform, and then click the Warp button which is at the right of the Options bar. This divides your selection or layer into a grid with Bézier handles which you will then be able to adjust to create more fluid distortions.





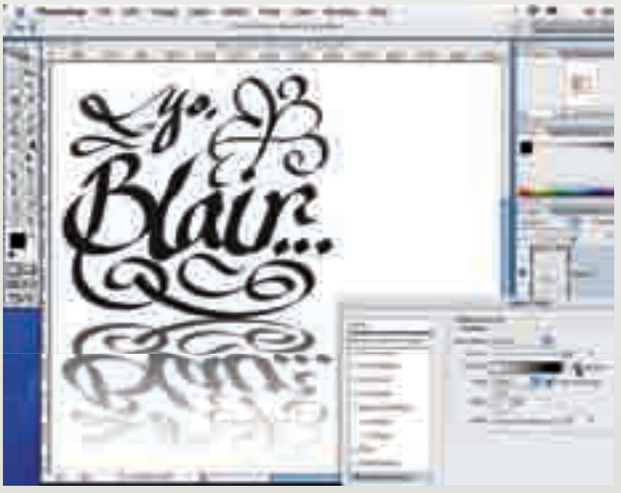
02 Selective scaling Of course, lettering doesn't all have to be the same. With the Marquee tool, drag a rectangle around a word you want larger, smaller or differently proportioned. Hit Apple+T for Transform, and drag the bounding box's handles to adjust this word. Watch for 'jaggies' if you increase its size too much. Hit Return to confirm the transformation.

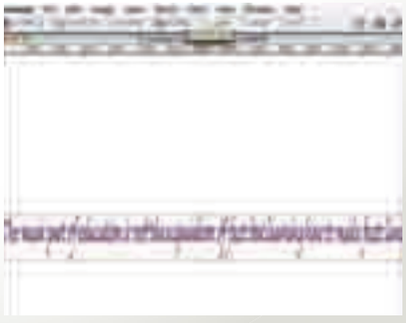


03 Corrective distortion Instead of making some words look different, you may want to transform parts of the lettering to make them look more consistent. Here, the top lines of text slant more than necessary. They can't be isolated in a rectangle, so draw around them with the Lasso tool (L). To edit this independently, go to Layer>New>Layer via Cut.

05 Mirror To reflect lettering, start by selecting it in a rectangular marquee as in step 2, with the bottom of the marquee at the lowest point of the lettering. Now go to Layer>New>Layer via Copy. Press Apple+T to show the bounding box, and then drag the top handle down below the base. Press Return when you're happy with the effect.

06 Fade off A reflection would fade off, and you can imitate this using a gradient. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Gradient Overlay. From the Gradient pick list, choose a black to white gradient (not black to transparent), then tick Reverse. Set Style to Linear and Angle to 90 degrees. At the top, change the blend mode to Screen.



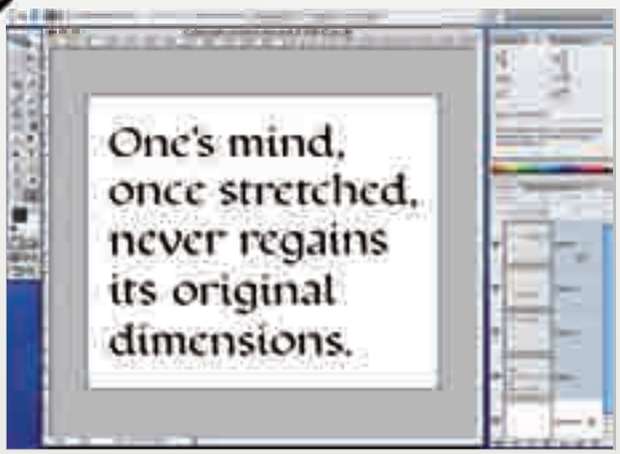


07 Advanced distortion You can also use Photoshop's more advanced distortions. For instance, to wrap a piece of text around a circle, start with a new document that's exactly square and twice as big as the size you want. In a new layer, write the text across the middle, filling the whole width. (Of course, you can cheat by scaling lettering to fit if necessary.)

08 Text around a circle Press Apple+T to transform your layer, and in the Options bar set H (height) to 300. Press Return to stretch your lettering to three times its original height. Make sure it's halfway down the canvas. Now go to Filter>Distort>Polar Coordinates. Choose Rectangular to Polar and click OK. Your lettering will wrap around a circle, restored to its original proportions.

Using drop shadows and layer effects

For that really posh look…



01 Prepare your lettering layer As long as you always create your calligraphy on a new blank layer, it's easy to enhance it with Layer Styles. The same is true if you cheat and use the Text tool with calligraphic fonts! If you have text on several layers, you'll need to merge them before you can apply the same effect to everything.

02 Add a drop shadow Shift-click to select all the relevant layers in the Layers palette, then press Apple+E. You can now go to Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow. Soften the shadow by increasing the Size. Adjust the Distance so the shadow is just off the text – any further is usually too distracting. The default 75% Opacity will generally look about right.

04 Scale to fit The Web Styles collection offers metallic and gel effects that can be surprisingly effective for calligraphy. To get the intended result on the lettering, you may need to adjust the scaling. Having applied a style, go to Layer>Layer Style> Scale Effects. Here we've reduced the Mercury Style to just 15% to cast our letters in polished metal.

05 Customise a preset Preset Styles are based on the same options you can set yourself in the Layer Style dialog box. So if the style you like (here it's Neutral Bevel, from the Text Styles 2 collection) doesn't have the drop shadow you want, just go to Layer>Layer Styles, choose the relevant attribute and set it to whatever you prefer.

07 Your own style If you don't find what you want in the ready-made styles, build up your own in the Layer Styles dialog. We used Bevel and Emboss to create a beaten metal effect. A Smooth Inner Bevel with a small Size (width) and large Depth gives each letter 3D form. The Texture option makes bumps on the surfaces: we chose the Bubbles pattern and scaled it down.

08 Combine effects for a finished result As with the calligraphy itself, the key to achieving a polished result is to keep trying until it looks just right. In Layer Styles, we used a Pattern Fill to add some extra surface shading and a fine Stroke to give the letters a crisp edge. Then we applied the mirroring technique described in steps 5-6 on page 21.

One's mind, once stretched, never regains its original dimensions.

03 Choose a preset style The Styles palette (open from the Window menu if you don't see it) offers a wide range of ready-made Layer Styles that simulate different textures and surfaces. Just click one of the thumbnails to apply it. Here we've chosen Tie-Dyed Silk. To see more options, click the triangle at the top right to pop up a menu, choose a collection and click Append.

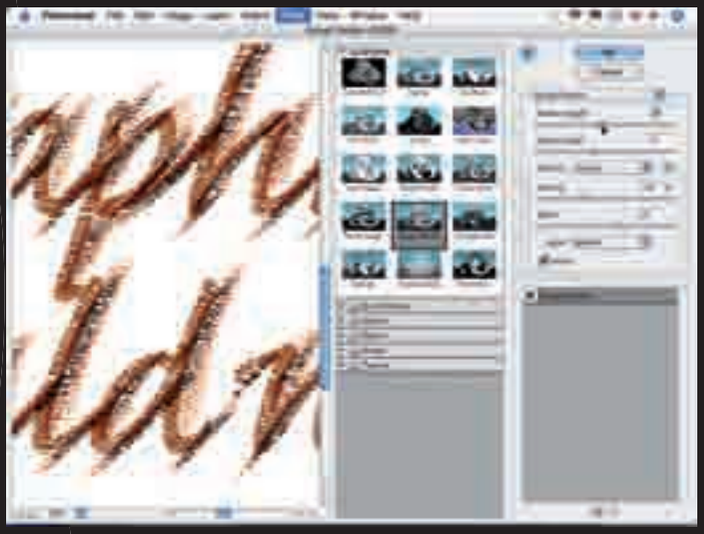
06 Add a colour overlay The Color Overlay option in Layer Styles is really useful for customising the look of a preset style. Some presets change only the edges of the lettering, leaving the interior as it is, while others change the interior to a colour that may not suit your project. To fix this, hit Color Overlay, then click the colour swatch to choose from the Color picker.

Flattening for filters

Most filters work best on flat images, where everything is part of the background, rather than transparent layers. You can flatten a layered image that you're working on by going to Layer > Flatten Image. A better method though, is to use Image > Duplicate, and in the dialog box tick Duplicate Merged Layers Only. This creates a new, flattened copy of your artwork, leaving the original intact in case you need to edit the layers.

Filter effects

Photoshop's other filters and special effects, found in the Filter menu, have only limited uses with calligraphy because they're mostly intended for photographic images; apply them to plain black lettering and often nothing good happens. But there are exceptions. The Artistic group offers some of the most rewarding filters, such as Rough Pastels, which makes your text look as though you chalked it hastily onto coarsely textured paper, then went over it again with a few other colours. Play with the sliders – the effect may totally change at different levels – and choose an angle (in this case set by the Light option) that complements your writing strokes.



Occasionally filters can be applied to calligraphy effectively - try the Rough Pastels filter found in the Artistic Group

Check out this rough chalk effect we created here

"The Artistic group offers some of the most rewarding filters, such as Rough Pastels, which makes your text look as though you chalked it hastily onto coarsely textured paper, then went over it with a few other colours"

Special effects

Patterned text Lettering in its own layer can be textured using a Fill layer. In Layer>New Fill Layer>Pattern, tick Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask and click OK. Choose a pattern in the picker, and in the pop-up at its top right you can load sets of patterns. This is Carpet from Patterns 2.

Patterned background To texture the background, create a Pattern Fill layer (no mask) and pick a pattern; we used Gold Parchment from Color Paper. In the Layers palette, drag this below the lettering. Set the lettering to Darken to integrate text/background. If text is black, reduce Opacity.

Lighting Effects For extra atmosphere, cast lights across your 'parchment'. First flatten the image (see tip, page 23). Now go to Filter>Render>Lighting Effects, find a Style preset you like (this is 2 O'Clock Spotlight), then tweak it by moving the light(s) on the left and adjusting the sliders.

Bump map embossing Lighting Effects can simulate embossing. Flatten the image; apply a small Gaussian blur (Filter>Gaussian Blur), 1 or 2 pixels. Now use Lighting Effects as above, but at the bottom set Texture Channel to Red (or try Green or Blue). Drag the Height slider to 100 (Mountainous).

Double-stroke Use Stroke (Layer Styles) to 'double-stroke'. Create a letter in a layer, and the background the same colour (Edit>Fill or hit Apple+I to flip white to black). With the letter layer active, in Layer>Layer Style>Stroke, pick a colour; set Position to Inside. Make the strokes narrower than the gap.

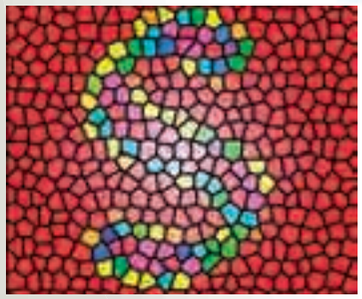
Battered print The Glass filter applied to a sharp black-on-white letter gives the effect of a poorly printed old document. Start with a flattened image, not a layer. Our settings were: Distortion 17, Smoothness 5, Texture Frosted. Adjust the Scaling slider according to the size of the lettering.

Antique This distressed look is achieved using a layer style. With the letter layer active, go to Layer>Layer Style>Inner Glow. Set the blend mode to Screen and Opacity to 100%. Hit the square swatch below and pick a dull yellow-orange. Set Source to Center, adjust Choke/Size, add some Noise.

Cutout To 'cut' your letters out of the background, first make them white (press Apple+I to flip black to white). Now go to Layer>Layer Style>Inner Shadow. Set quite a large Size, make Angle close to 90 degrees (vertical), and increase Distance to bias the shadow heavily one way.

Burnt linen For this effect, start with a flattened image. In Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast, reduce both to -50. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, increase Radius until the lettering is soft. In Filter>Sketch>Water Paper, increase Fiber Length, decrease Brightness and adjust Contrast.

Scraperboard To get this effect, where black paint is scratched away, start with a grey letter on a white layer. In Filter>Sketch>Graphic Pen, adjust and apply the effect, then hit Apple+I to invert. Set the blending to Multiply. Add a colourful image/texture in a new layer and drag it below the letter.



Stained glass Use Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur to soften the edges of the lettering (try a Radius of 10 or 20 pixels), then add colour with Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map>Spectrum. Apply Filter>Texture>Stained Glass, increasing Cell Size and Border Thickness to make the 'leading' visible.

Masked lettering White lettering on a background is made by inking letters with a glaze then painting with watercolour. To simulate it, create white lettering in a layer, then paint on the background with a fancy brush; we used Rough Dry Brush from Wet Media. Jitter and Scatter vary the strokes.

tutorials

More fabulous tutorials to make you glad to be a Photoshop user! Whether it's image editing or digital art creation, there's something to tickle your fancy

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Big technique

Make buttons for your website 46

Ensure you stand out from the crowd by creating your own bespoke gel buttons for your web page

Focus on...

We take a look at how different brush styles can improve your projects. Plus there's an in-depth look at the benefits of textures to give your artwork a realistic edge

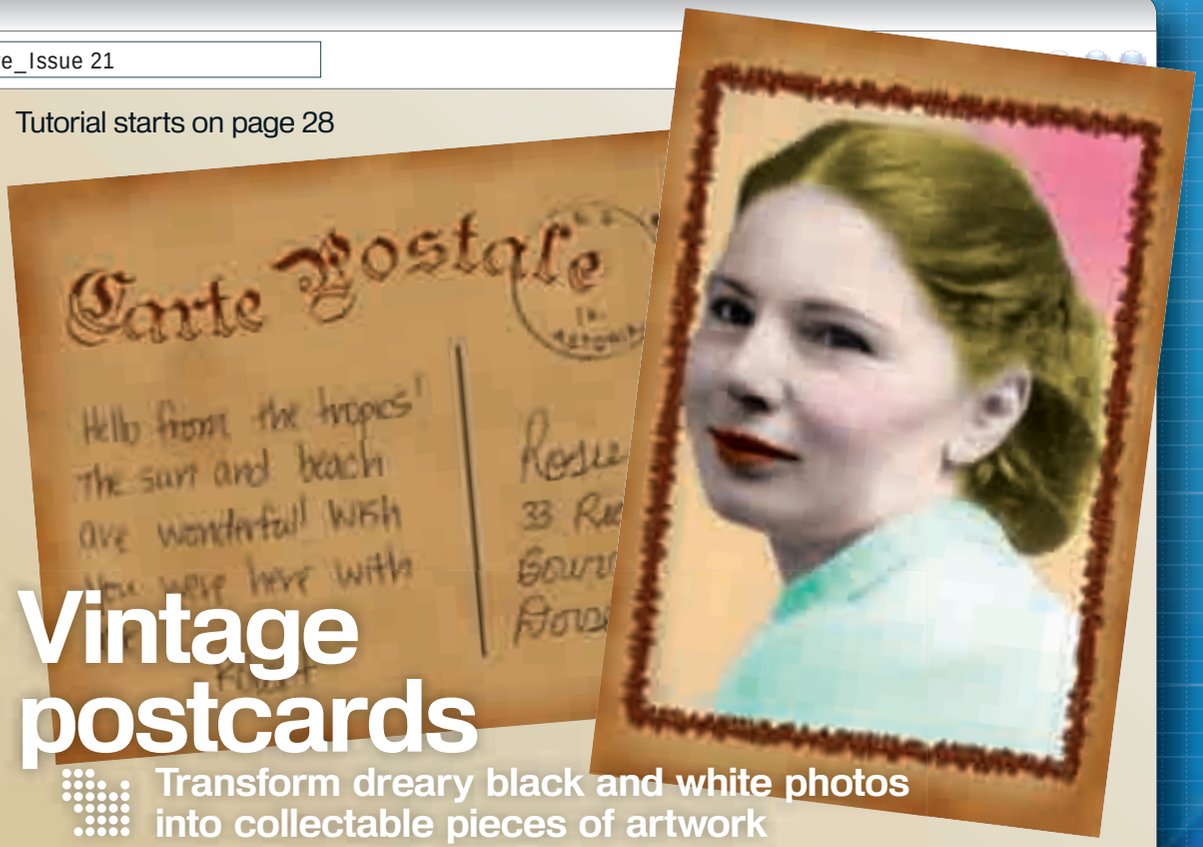
Brush styles 36
Textures 62

Cool plug-ins

Akvis Sketch plug-in 72

We discover that there's an artist in all of us, especially thanks to the pencil sketch conversions made possible by the Akvis Sketch plug-in. Create amazing artistic effects – no pencil required

Tutorial starts on page 28



Vintage postcards

Transform dreary black and white photos into collectable pieces of artwork

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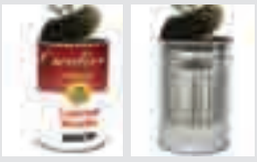

60 Learn how to warp graphics

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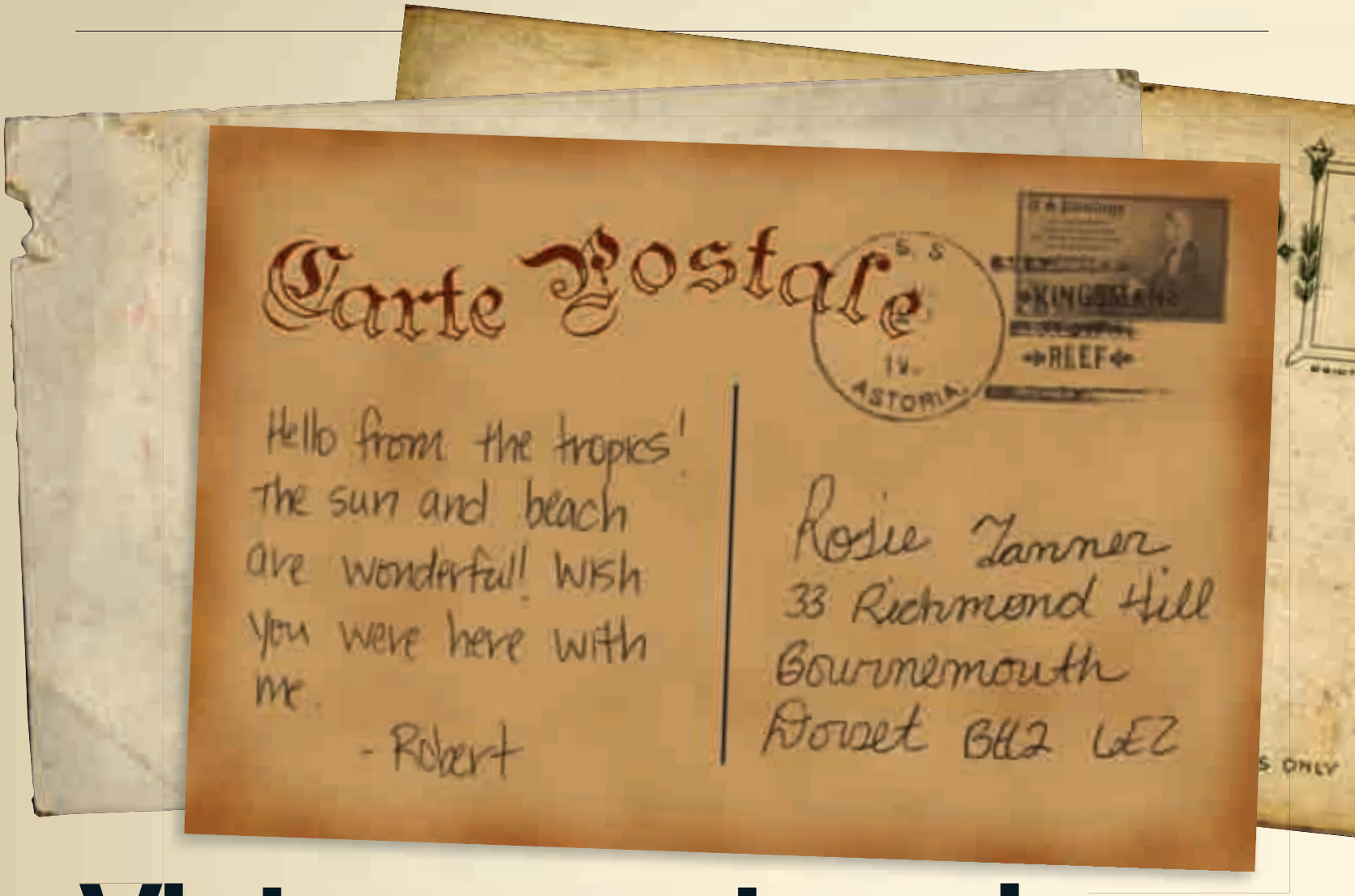
CHECK IT OUT! | TUTORIAL RESOURCE FILES CAN BE FOUND ON THE CD – SEE THE INSIDE BACK COVER



Vintage postcards

Create a vintage tinted postcard and backing from your favourite black-and-white portraits

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
1-1.5 hours

YOUR EXPERT
Rob Anselmi

ON THE CD
Source files

Between 1900 and 1930, hand-tinted photographic postcards were widely distributed throughout Europe and the US.

Today, resurgence in hand tinting has made its way back into the mainstream by way of printed cards that attempt to replicate these pastel colours and fanciful styles. Go to your local card shop and you'll find many playful greeting cards with cute children holding hands or couples engaged in a warm dramatic embrace. These cards have their origins in a bygone age of hand-tinted postcards.

Here you will not only learn how to recreate the hand-tinting process, but also the application of film grain and recreation of the postcard backing. You will take things a step further by recreating the fibre texture on the postcard, and ageing the paper. This gives the postcard a true vintage quality. In addition, you will see how brushes can be used to add a touch of realism, and how useful colour palettes can be to apply swatches of colour to the image.

Lastly, you will learn how dodging and burning can be applied to bring out shadows and highlights within the flesh tones, and how this same process can be used to enhance the burnt edging of the postcard backing.

One of the strengths of this process is that you don't need to be a fine artist. Selections and paint strokes need not be precise. Often, the hand-tinted postcards would exhibit painting strokes that went 'outside the lines'. This added to their charm. So don't be shy if you think you can't paint. Another benefit is that all aspects of this process are fully editable and non-destructive. You can come back a year later and make adjustments as you see fit. So put on your smock, grab your palette and bring your creativity to the canvas.

WORKS WITH | CREATED IN CS2

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

- TINTING A BLACK & WHITE PHOTO
- CREATING A TEXTURED PAPER BACKING
- USING FONTS, BRUSHES AND COLOUR SWATCH PALETTES
- AGEING TECHNIQUES
- ADDING FILM GRAIN
- APPLY LOCAL AND GLOBAL TONAL CHANGES

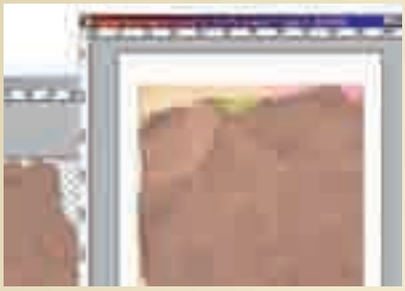
Expert Tip

Personalised postcards

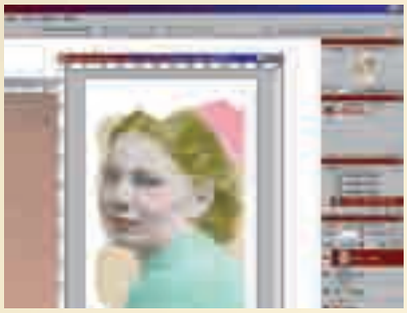
Try scanning a personalised text note and create a brush out of the text, just as you did for the postmark, and stamp it over the left and/or right side of the postcard backing on its own layer at the top of the layer stack. Don't worry if it's crooked – this only adds to the realism. Alternatively, you could directly write in your text using the Pencil tool (under the Brush tool) and a graphics tablet.

GETTING STARTED

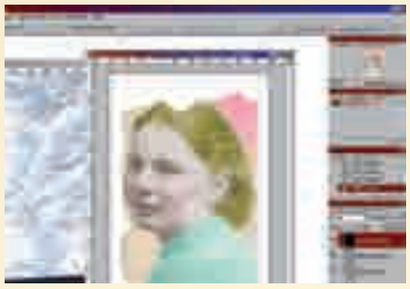
It's all in the preparation



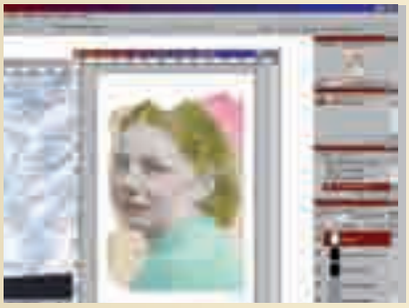
01 Prepare the workspace For this tutorial, we will need a few extra resources to hand. These files can all be accessed from the CD. Load the 'Postcard Palette.act' into the Swatches palette. Then load the 'Postcard Brushes.abr' into the Brushes palette. Be sure to 'replace' the swatches, but 'append' the brushes to the default brushes.



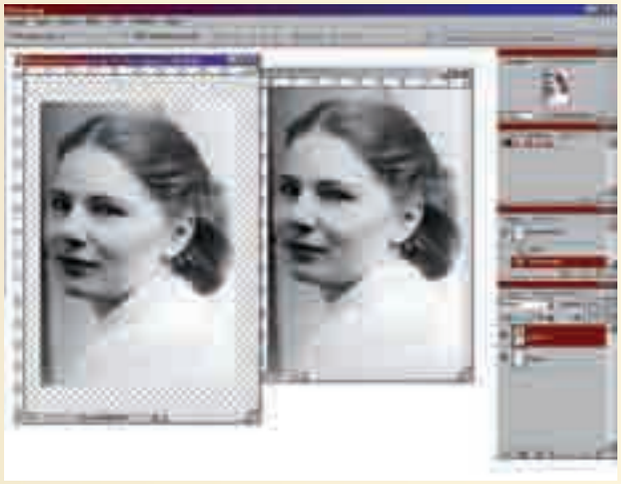
02 Open the base image Suitable subjects are children and couples, but any black and white portrait works. Snap a few shots of your family or friends, then select one and open it. Or open our image supplied on the CD. Be sure the image you are using is around 1000 x 1500px (or larger) at 300ppi.



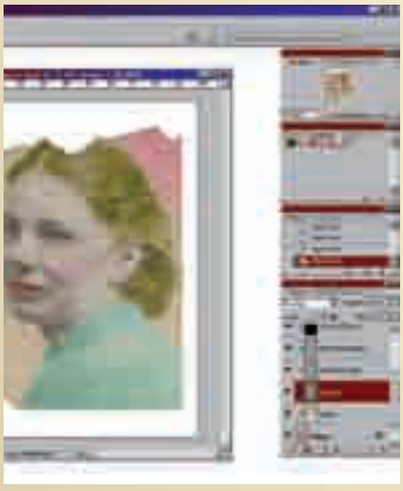
03 Postcard size and orientation The standard postcard size during the golden age of postcards was 8.89 by 13.97cm, but let's start by creating a modern-day postcard of 10.16 by 15.24cm. Let the orientation of the base image determine the orientation of the postcard. Since our image's height is longer, the width will be 10.16cm and height 15.24cm.



04 Create the postcard document Create a new 10.16 x 15.24cm document at 300ppi. Tip: you can save two postcard presets – one for each orientation – to make creating a postcard easier in the future. Make sure the new document is set to RGB and the background is transparent.

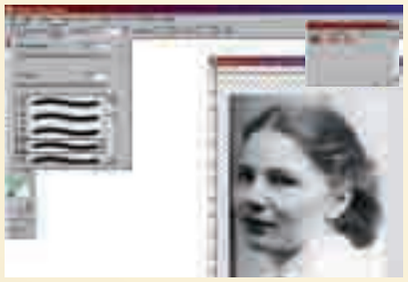


05 Bring the base image into the postcard Holding the Shift key down, use the Move tool (V) to drag the base image into the centre of the postcard document. To resize the image to fit, use Edit>Transform>Scale. Leave yourself enough room for a border (about 1-2cm). You can close the base image window now, because you won't need it any more.



06 Cut out the subject Create a selection of the subject using your favourite selection tool, and then copy the subject to a new layer. Here, the original subject layer was copied, and the Extract filter used on the duplicated copy (Filter>Extract). The Eraser tool was then used in order to remove stray pixels.

07 Create the first tinting layer Create a layer at the top of the stack named 'Sweater'. Change this layer's blend mode to Color. This ensures that painting doesn't affect the underlying luminosity of the image. Tip: when you begin to paint, it may be easier to switch the blend mode to Normal until your painting is complete, then switch back to Color.



08 Select a palette colour You are now ready to hand-tint the image. Since vintage postcards used soft pastels combined with vibrant colours, you'll use this same palette. Pick the 'Sweater' swatch in the Swatches palette (previously loaded), then click the Brush tool (B) and pick a soft rounded brush about 100px wide.

HAND-TINTING
Go for the glow

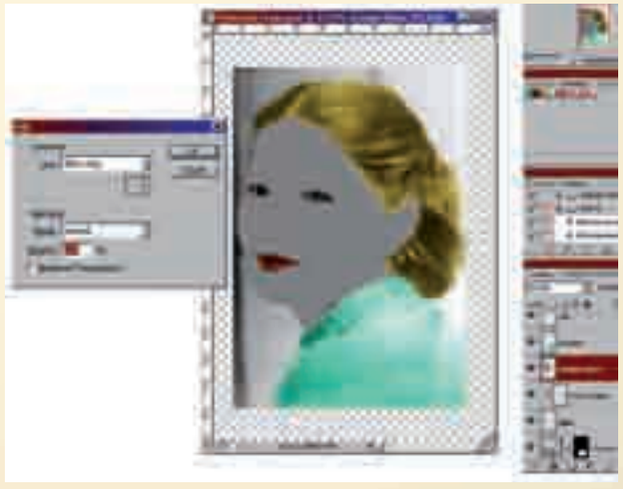
09 Splash on paint Now paint the woman's sweater. Don't be too precise, but try staying inside the lines. Vary the brush size by clicking the [key (smaller) or] key (larger). Ctrl/Cmd-click on the base photo layer thumbnail and invert the selection (Shift+Ctrl/Cmd-click). Now press Delete. This removes paint outside the image boundaries. Finally, lock the layer transparency (first icon atop the Layers palette).

10 Colour in one layer at a time Repeat the process by creating new Color layers for each element of the image, such as the woman's lips, hair and skin. Leave the eyes untouched. Now paint appropriate colours for each using the swatches. If you accidentally paint too far outside the lines, switch to the Eraser (E) and erase mistakes. Finally, lock each layer's transparency.

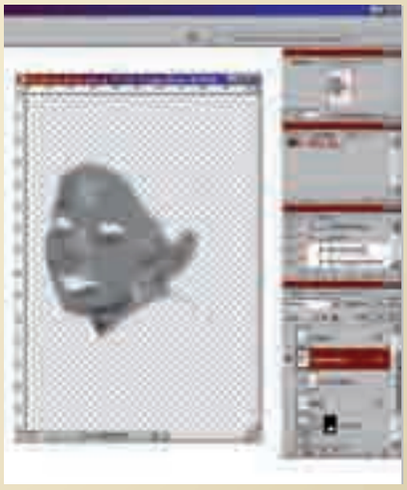
11 Rosy cheeks (part 1) Move the Skin layer just above the subject cutout layer. Then create a new 'rosy cheeks' layer above the skin layer. Create a rough lasso selection around one cheek. Now hold the Shift key down and add the other cheek by creating another rough selection. Fill it with the rosy cheek colour from the palette (Edit>Fill).

12 Rosy cheeks (part 2) Change the blend mode of the rosy cheeks layer to Color. Deselect the selection (Ctrl/Cmd+D). Now add a 50 pixel Gaussian blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur). Group the rosy cheeks layer with the skin layer beneath and *voila* – instant rosebuds!

13 Colour and tone corrections all at once Both colour and tonality are too light in the sweater. To correct this, Ctrl/Cmd+Click on the sweater layer thumbnail, and select the subject cutout layer. Create a curve adjustment layer above it, applying the curve shown here. The curve can be found on the CD.



14 Dodge and burn (part 1) To accentuate highlights and shadows of the skin tones in a non-destructive way, create a layer above the rosy cheeks layer and name it 'dodge/burn'. Ctrl/Cmd-click the skin layer thumbnail and with the dodge/burn layer still selected, fill it with 50% grey. Deselect (Ctrl/Cmd+D) and lock the transparent pixels on the layer. Now change the blend mode to Overlay.



15 Dodge and burn (part 2) Click the Burn tool first (O), set the Range to Shadows and Exposure to 25%. Then reset the foreground/background (D) and burn in areas with a small soft brush (about 60px). Accentuate the darker shadows in the face. Now switch to the Dodge tool and set the Range to Highlights and Exposure to 25%. Dodge out lighter highlight areas.

Expert Tip

Font/brush resources

There are several 'resource' files on the CD, eg the source files, brushes and fonts. A huge thanks goes to Janet Goulden for kindly donating the image used in the film grain section. Her image can be found at **www.sxc.hu (image #684020)**. For further font resources, visit:

http://simplythebest.net/fonts/index.html

www.searchfreefonts.com/

www.fontface.com

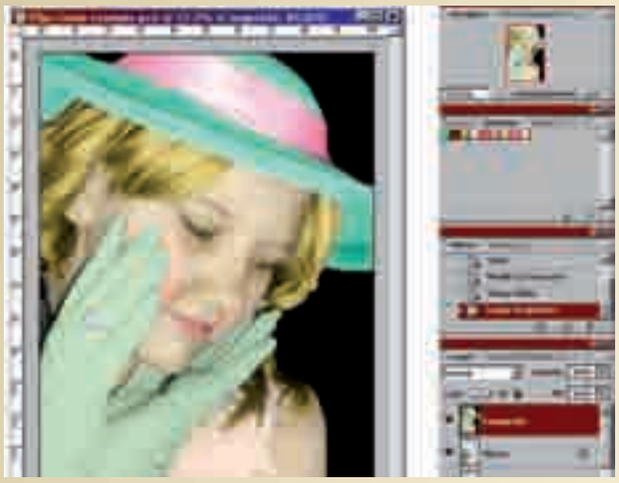
For some good brush resources:

www.photoshopsupport.com/tools/brushes.html

www.photoshoproadmap.com/Photoshop-downloads/Brushes/Most-popular/1/

ADDING FILM GRAIN

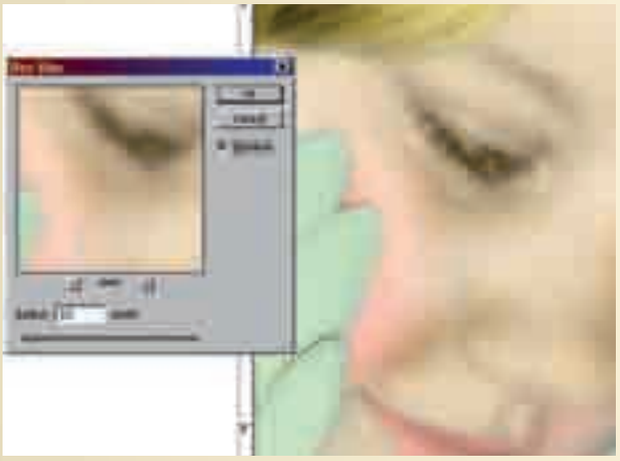
Give new photos that vintage touch



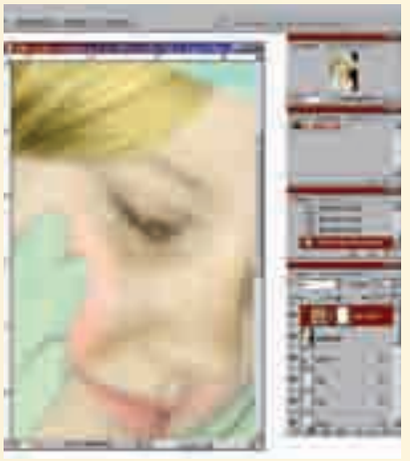
16 Create a composite copy This image doesn't need it, but sharper images need film grain added. Momentarily switch to another example. First you'd complete the postcard front with all layers intact, then create a composite copy by selecting the top layer. Press Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+E. All layers are copied and merged in a new top layer. Layers below are preserved.

17 Blending the composite Blend the composite layer by selecting the Dissolve blend mode, and change the Opacity to 50%. Nothing will happen because the image is being dissolved with itself. In reality, the top image is breaking up into a fine grain. You just need to change the pixels to see the effect.

18 Diffused film grain Go to Filter>Blur>Box Blur. If you have a version of Photoshop prior to CS, you can still use Gaussian Blur instead. The effect is marginally different. Enter a radius of 10 pixels. Now things start to take shape, as the grain becomes noticeable. This is the wonder of the Dissolve blend mode.



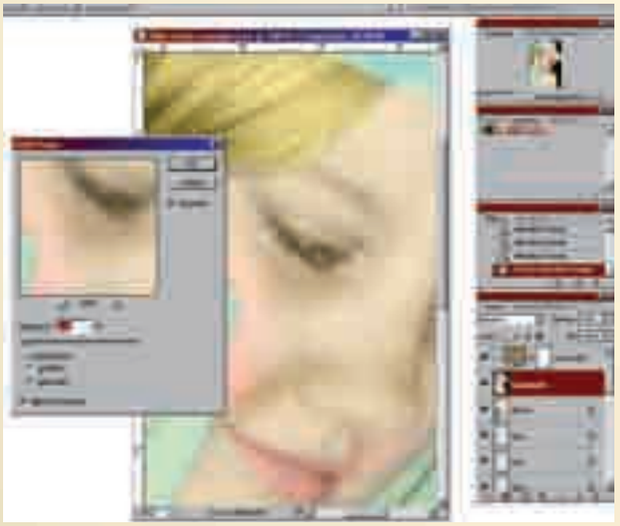
19 Soften the Shadows Create a Solid Color adjustment layer and select the following colour: Red: 157, Blue: 130, Green: 78. This is a fairly neutral brown that helps bring back a little life to the image. Change the blend mode to Screen, and Opacity to around 10-20%. Group the layer with the underlying composite.



History of the postcard

The first postcard was introduced in Austria in 1869, though the hand-tinted postcards you're recreating here were mostly made in France and Belgium between 1915 and 1930. During this time, postcards had a white border (to save on printing costs) and were created by teams of artists in a factory setting, with each artist responsible for a different colour. This was a very unhealthy practice, as most of the inks were made from lead, and factory workers were exposed when they wet the tips of their brushes with their lips as they worked. Many fell ill, and this, in part, led to the decline of this type of hand-tinting. The subject matter of the cards varied, but the photos from this era mainly consisted of beautiful women adorned with flowers, or couples in romantic poses. With the rise of the theatre, several cards were printed showing stars of the day or scenes from a production. Anything and everything was printed as a hand-tinted photo, and for a brief time, hand-tinted photographic postcards flourished. For a history of the postcard, visit:

- **www.emotionscards.com/museum/historyofpostcards.htm**
- **http://tallulahs.com/cd3q1.html**
- **www.dgillan.screaming.net/stage/th-cards.html**



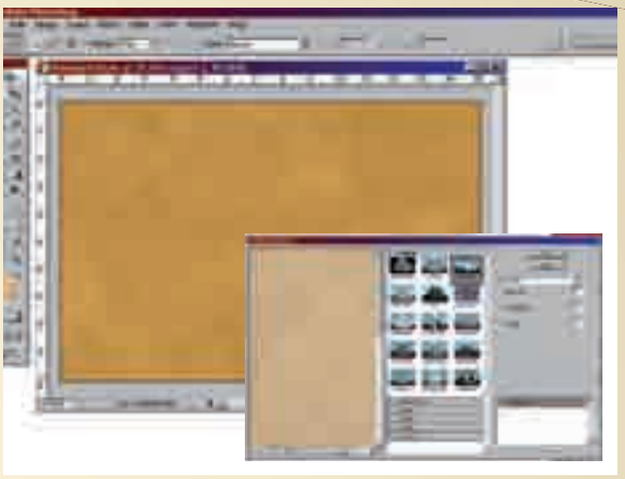
20 Add a touch of noise The final step to build up the film grain is to go back to the copied composite layer and apply some noise (Filter>Noise>Add Noise). Enter 1.5% for the amount, click the Gaussian radio button and check the Monochromatic box. The film grain is now complete.

AGEING EFFECTS

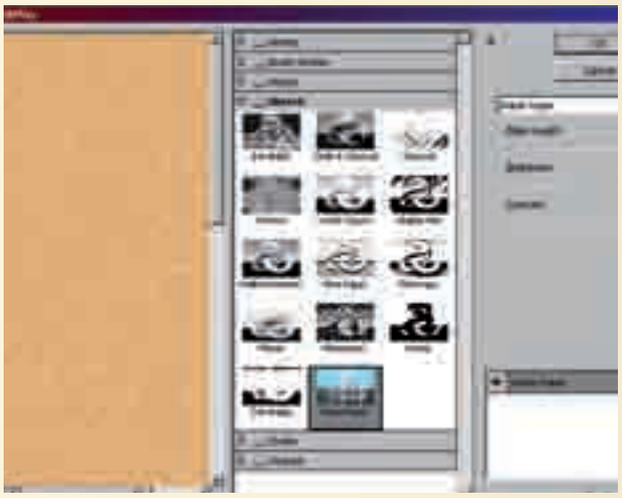
Layer on the years

21 The backing Create a document the same dimensions as the front, with a horizontal orientation. Name it 'Postcard Back'. Load the foreground with the 'back1' swatch, and background with 'back2'. Go to Filter>Render>Clouds. Add Grain (Filter>Texture>Grain). Enter Intensity: 33, Contrast: 50, Grain Type: Sprinkles.

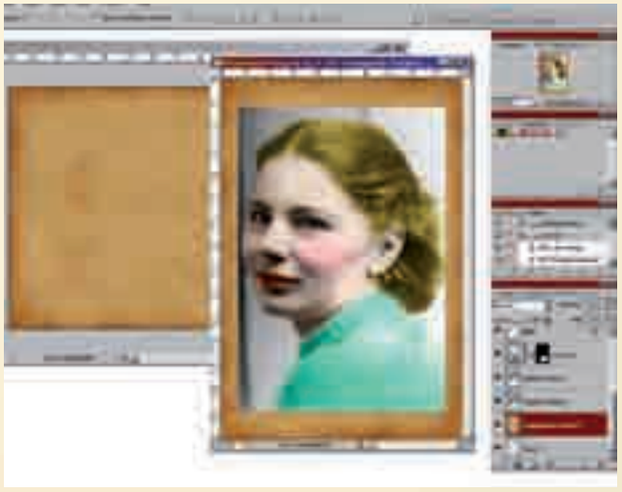
22 Build up the texture Duplicate the base layer and apply the Dry Brush filter (Filter>Artistic>Dry Brush). Enter 0 for Brush Size and Detail, and 1 for Texture. Change this layer to Multiply. Create an empty layer at the top of the stack and fill it with the 'back3' swatch colour. Change the blend mode to Soft Light.



23 Add more texture and lighten up Go to Filter>Sketch>Water Paper and enter Fibre Length: 3, Brightness: 48, Contrast: 77. Create a Levels adjustment layer at the top of the stack, and enter 1.10 for the middle input level and 240 for the output highlight level (right). Create a new layer filled with 50% grey. Change the blend mode to Overlay. Reset the foreground/background (D).



24 Dodge and burn Use the Dodge and Burn tools (O) to darken and lighten a few spots inside the document, just as you did with the skin layer on the front of the postcard. Now roughly burn the outer edges. This, along with the previous textures, promotes the illusion of a vintage fibrous paper.



25 Creating a consistent background Create a composite copy of the postcard back layers (Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+E) and with Shift held down, move the composite layer from the postcard back to the postcard front document. Now rotate the layer 90° (Edit>Transform>Rotate 90° CW). Move it below the original photo layer. This gives the front the same texture as the back.

26 Pastel background (part 1) Sandwich a new layer between the subject original and cutout. Select the 'pastel1' swatch. Using a large brush, paint the photo's top-left corner. Select 'pastel2' and paint the rest of the background. Apply a 100px Gaussian blur. Hold Ctrl/Cmd and click the original layer thumbnail. Now hold Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt, and click the subject cutout thumbnail to subtract the subject.

Expert Tip

Creating a postage stamp brush

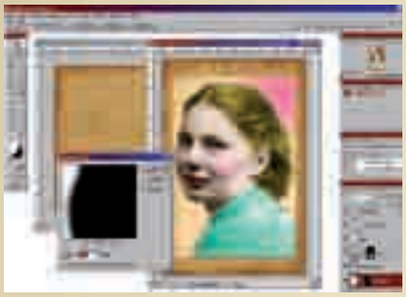
Even though snail mail is uncommon, most of us have received at least some mail. Why not scan the postmark along with the stamp and then turn it into a brush. Once scanned, create a selection of the postmark/stamp, and place it on its own layer. Fill the background layer with white. Finally, select the postmark layer and go to Edit>Define Custom Brush. Give the brush a name and you're done. Follow the tutorial to colour the stamp.

Expert Tip

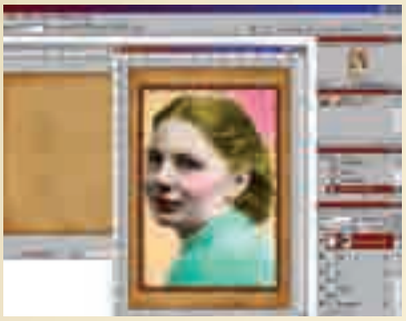
Photoshop presets

Resource files like brushes, styles and patterns can be loaded using the Preset Manager (Edit menu). From here you can add, save and delete presets. The Preset Manager doesn't manage every kind of support file Photoshop uses (eg tool presets, lighting effects and texture maps can't be managed), but provides an easy way to handle common presets.

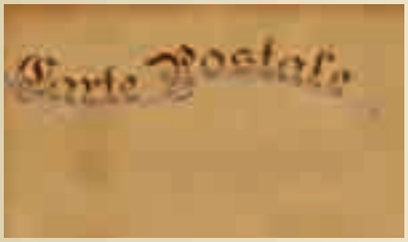
NOW FOR THE BACK
Flip reverse it



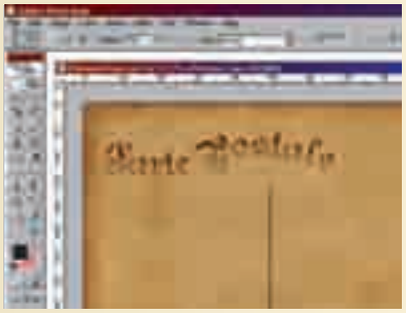
27 Pastel background (part 2) With the Pastel background layer still selected, click the Layer Mask icon to mask the outer border. Create a selection of the cutout once again, but only the cutout this time. Then apply a 20-pixel border (Select>Modify>Border). Apply a 10-pixel Gaussian blur. This softens the edging between the cutout and original layer beneath. Deselect when done (Ctrl/Cmd+D).



28 Ornate interior framing Move 'Layer 1' to the top. Make a selection of the original photo, and convert to a path. Select the 'lips' swatch, and the 75px 'Chalk Border' brush (supplied). Click the Path palette arrow and stroke with the brush. Make a selection from the skin layer. Press Alt/Opt and click the Mask icon, pushing the border behind the face. Done.

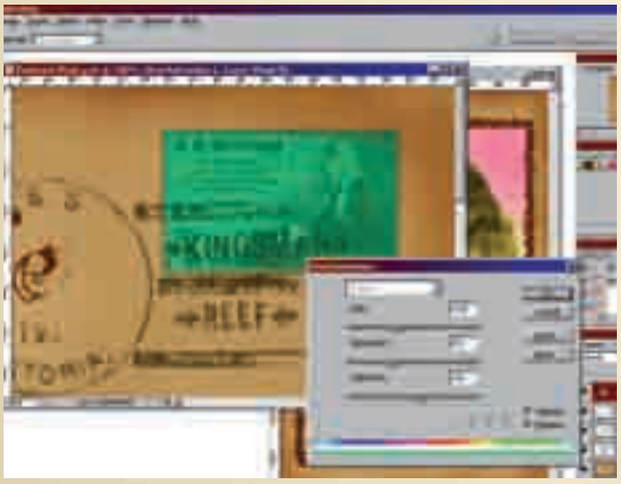


29 Create the text at the top of the document Go back to the Postcard Back document and create a wavy path along the top. Now find a suitable fat font (we used 'Teutonic No3' here), and with the Type tool (T) selected, click on top of the path at the left. This applies the type to the path. Now type 'Post Card' or 'Carte Postale', in keeping with the French tradition.

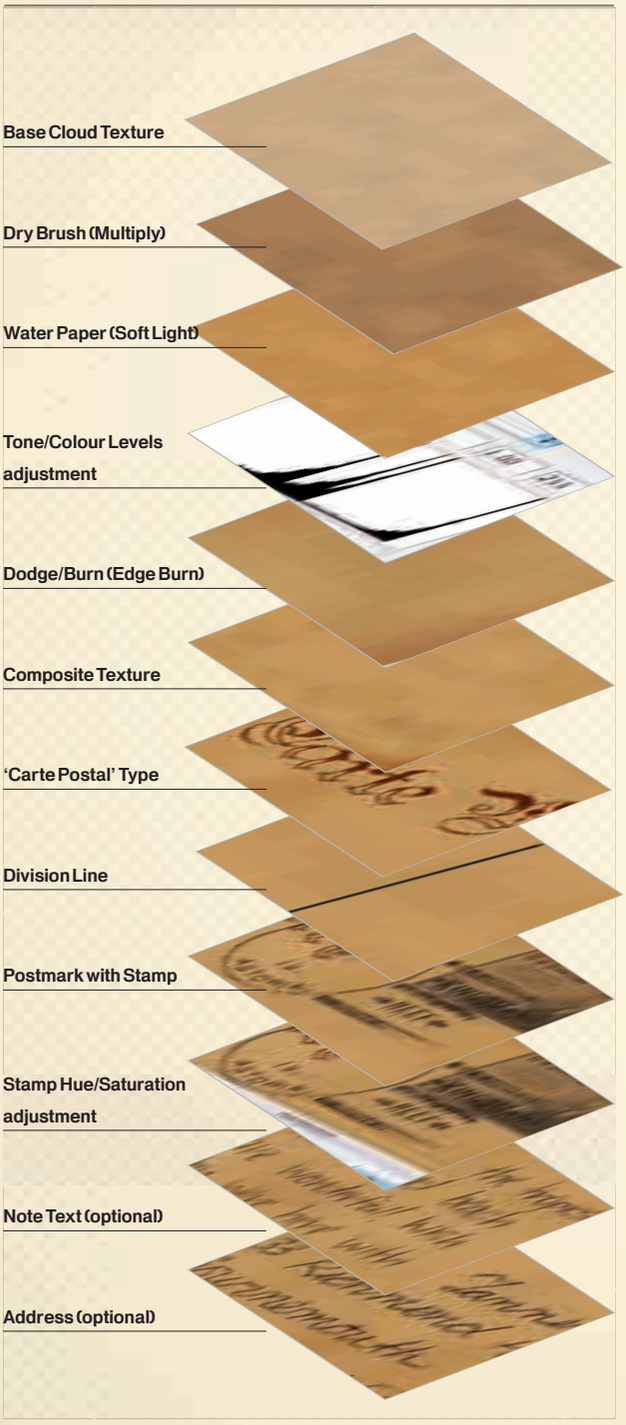


30 Add a dividing line Reset the foreground/background (D). On a new layer above the text, create a division line which runs down the card centre as shown. Here, a line was created using the Line tool set to 'Pixels' in the Options bar. A 5 or 6-pixel line is sufficient.

31 Postmark and stamp Create a new top layer. Access the Brushes palette and select one of the supplied postmark brushes. Click the upper right corner, adding an imprint. Select the stamp with the Polygon Lasso tool (L) and create a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Click Colorize and adjust the Hue/Saturation sliders to set a stamp colour of your choice.

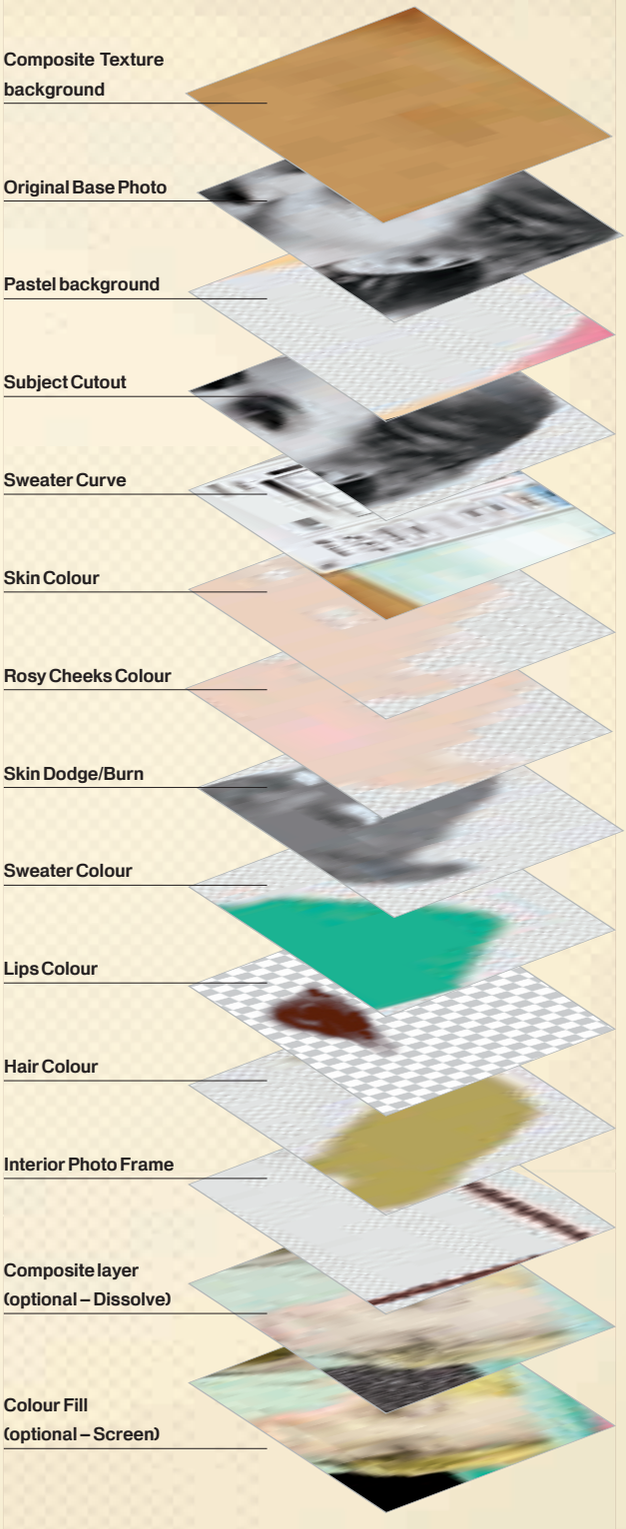


The layer structure
Postcard back (bottom to top)



The layer structure

Postcard front (bottom to top)



AGEING TECHNIQUES

Give your pic that vintage feel

01 Combine layers and add edging With the main image on a white background, build up an edge around the image by moving the 'Edging.psd' file into the main image. Adjust the edging to within a few sides of the image, create a selection and delete the edging outside the boundaries. Move the edging layer below the image layer; clip the image layer.

02 Add a fibre texture Open 'Fibre.jpg' and move it to the main image doc at the top of the stack. Desaturate (Image>Adjustments>Desaturate) and change the blend mode to Hard Light. Copy the layer; change the blend mode to Multiply at 25% Opacity. These layers should be clipped with the layers below.

03 Image cracks We'll now add some cracks. Open 'Paper.jpg' and move it into the top layer of the main image. Desaturate, clip it with the layers below; change the blend mode to Screen. Use the Find Edges filter (Filter>Stylize>Find Edges) to produce the cracks. Invert the layer (Ctrl/Cmd+I) so the cracks show through.

04 More cracks and creases Copy the Cracks layer; reduce Opacity to 50%. Move another copy of 'Paper.jpg' to the top of the stack, desaturate and clip with the layers below. Make the blend mode Linear Burn at 25%; scale the Layer (Edit>Transform>Scale) to fit the image.

05 A little colour correction Add a Solid Fill Color adjustment layer (Red: 188, Green: 180, Blue: 150) to the top of the layer stack. Change the blend mode to Multiply at 50% Opacity. This gives the postcard paper a vintage quality. Select the Edging layer and add a drop shadow with the settings shown above. Pay careful attention to the contour used.

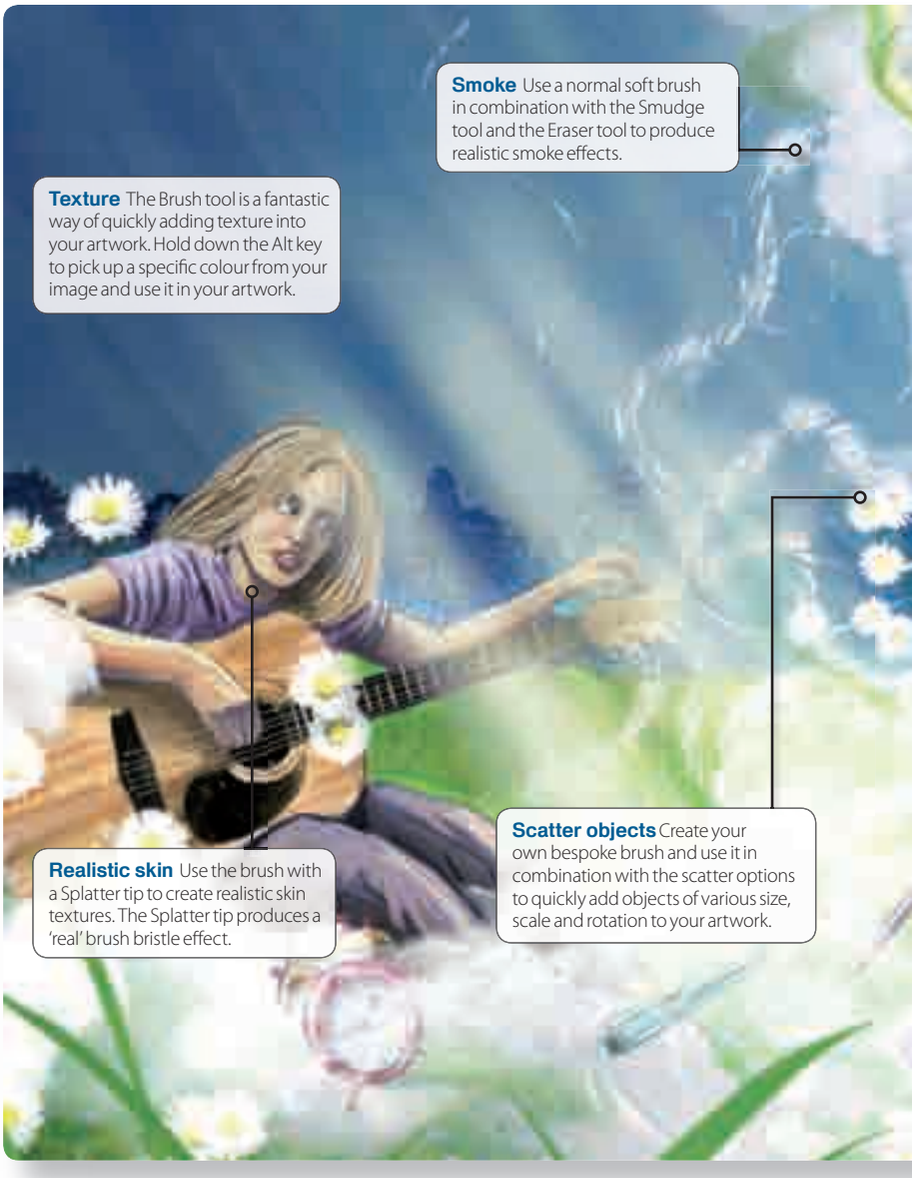
06 Burnt edges Sandwich a new layer between the image and fibre layer above. Fill it with 50% grey and change the blend mode to Overlay. Now use the Burn tool to burn out the edging along the borders, especially where the postcard is torn. That's all there is to it – with a few textures you can build a very intricate aged postcard.

Brush styles

Take control over your brushes by setting different styles through the Brush palette to achieve spectacular effects

Brushes are a fantastic utility in Photoshop, and in recent years there has been a steady rise in the number of people on the internet producing these unique resources and giving them away totally free of charge. In fact, you need only pop into the cover CD that accompanies *Photoshop Creative* to find a whole host of free brush sets to liven up your artwork. But to really get the most out of this fantastic free resource, you have to change the style settings in the Brush palette, or create your own brush, as it's often quicker to define your own resource than search through the net trying to find the perfect match.

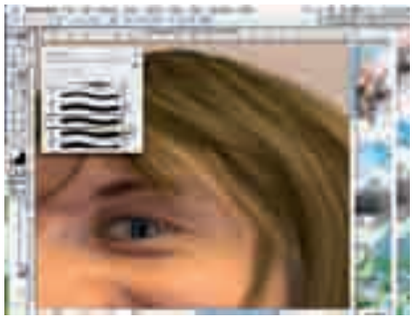
To truly get the most out of Photoshop brushes it's best to use a graphics tablet. This gives you greater control since you can specify the pressure when drawing straight into your Photoshop artwork – much as you'd draw with a real pencil or paintbrush. This produces an extremely realistic effect, especially if you've chosen the correct brush tip. But fear not if you don't have one, as plenty can still be achieved with a mouse. With some simple tweaks in the Brush palette some truly fantastic effects can be produced.


Smoke Use a normal soft brush in combination with the Smudge tool and the Eraser tool to produce realistic smoke effects.
Texture The Brush tool is a fantastic way of quickly adding texture into your artwork. Hold down the Alt key to pick up a specific colour from your image and use it in your artwork.
Realistic skin Use the brush with a Splatter tip to create realistic skin textures. The Splatter tip produces a 'real' brush bristle effect.
Scatter objects Create your own bespoke brush and use it in combination with the scatter options to quickly add objects of various size, scale and rotation to your artwork.

Perfect skin

Create a realistic skin tone

Photoshop comes complete with plenty of brushes to get you started. Ninety per cent of the time you will just use a circle brush with a feathered edge, but to get that perfect skin texture it's best to use an imperfect brush. From the Brush Tip menu, select any of the splatter brushes (found within the standard presets) – try and use the same brush throughout, as it will maintain a running style. Always work from the background to the foreground colour and use a Flow of 100% when shading and Opacity of between 40% and 80%. For the highlights use a Flow of between 20% and 30% and Opacity of between 50% and 90%.



Scatter objects

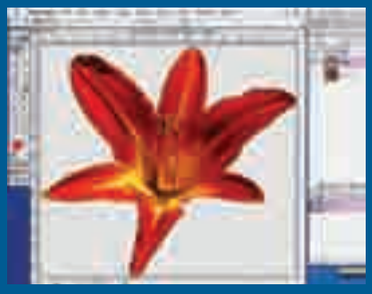
The quickest way to create artwork

The best example of this is the recent Sony PSP and PS3 advertisements where icons such as a controller, a camera, a musical note, a globe, etc fly around the product. This is perfectly simple. All you need to do is first create the individual icons, then set the scatter options in the Brush palette and then simply paint away. One of the most powerful features of the Brush palette is that it enables you to maintain the brush presets while being able to change the tip, ensuring that you get the same effect every time.

Perfect custom brushes

A few simple techniques

Get the most out of every custom brush you create by following the three steps below, and get perfect results every time.



01 Isolate the object
Select the Pen in the toolbar (P), and in the Options menu at the top, select Paths. Now use the Pen tool to cut out the object. This will ensure its shape will be smooth and flowing throughout your brush.

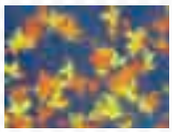
02 Adjust the levels
Convert to greyscale and select the levels in Image>Adjustments. Hit the white colour picker and select an area of grey at 20%. Hit the black picker, select a grey area at 90% and pull up the mid-tones.

03 Define the brush Go to Edit>Define Brush. A dialog will appear with the filename suggested as a name. Change it if you wish and hit OK. Now select the brush from the toolbar (B); your new brush will be selected by default.

Brush style tips

Scattered Maple leaves

Fantastic brush with Scatter already set. You'll notice the colour, size, transform and rotation changes with every stroke.



Chalk brush

A basic texture brush that will add a realistic effect to your artwork. Adjust the flow for added effect.

Star brush

This brush is intended as more of a highlight or detail brush tip. It's very difficult to use as texture but great for special effects.

Watercolor brush

This one has a natural wet edge that gives a realistic watercolour effect, perfect for creating effects over the top of images.

Perfect smoke

Create realistic smoke flow

Select a 65px soft round brush tip set to white, 100% Opacity and 100% Flow, and draw a small horizontal line. Transform the vertical direction and stretch it out so it's 10 times longer. Select the Smudge tool and select a 50px soft round brush tip with a strength of around 50%, begin to smudge over the line and spread out the smoke (try and add in some swirls). Select the Eraser tool with a soft round brush tip set to 40% Opacity and begin to soften the overall effect.

Glowing brushes

Create glowing effects

Starting with a blank document, select the Lens Flare filter, position over the top of itself in the Filter dialog and hit OK. Next, duplicate the layer and apply a Gaussian filter, reducing the opacity. Define a brush tip and select it in the Brush palette. Then define the scatter option, rotation, scale and colour dynamics, and begin to brush away to your heart's content – a fantastic and simple effect that will add life to any sci-fi artwork.

Create a starburst filter effect

Add catchlights to reflective surfaces in your images using Photoshop's Polygon and Brush tools

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
10 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Rob Anselmi

Starburst filters can be purchased to fit over your camera lens in order to create catchlights on reflective surfaces in your photos. However, one major disadvantage you have when using a traditional starburst filter such as the Cokin 056-059 diffracter filters found at www.cokin.co.uk/pages/diffractor2.htm, is that you cannot select the specific location in which the starburst will occur. It will usually appear in either a single spot where you aim your camera, or else it will occur wherever the light source is located. In addition, these filters come with a specified number of points on the star. This is limiting.

Enter Photoshop, and you'll see that these catchlights can be easily reproduced using Photoshop's brushes.

In this tutorial we explore how to add a few starbursts, making them look as realistic as possible. In the process, you will learn how to create your own toolkit of brushes so that any time you wish to add a reflective catchlight, you can pull one out of your toolbox and apply it instantly. Using Photoshop, you can choose the specific point at which the starburst occurs (or multiple points), and create starbursts with any number of star points you wish. In addition, creating stars of any shape and size by manipulating the paths in a shape layer provides additional variation to the effect. This opens up a whole world of possibilities…

STARS IN YOUR EYES

The first star

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

- POLYGON TOOL
- BRUSHES
- SHAPE LAYERS
- DIRECT SELECTION TOOL

01 Create a new document Your first step is to create a new document 250 pixels by 250 pixels in size, with a white background. Be sure to match the resolution of the image in which you will be adding the starburst.

02 Polygon star parameters Select the Polygon tool (U). In the Options bar, hit the Shape Layers icon then click the Geometry Options arrow and enter 100px in the Radius field. Check the Star box and Indent Sides by 92%. The higher this value, the sharper the star points.

03 Catchlight points Enter 5 for the number of sides. For a polygon star, this value represents the number of points on your star. For more points, enter a higher number. A catchlight usually consists of 2-8 points. You're now ready to draw your catchlight.

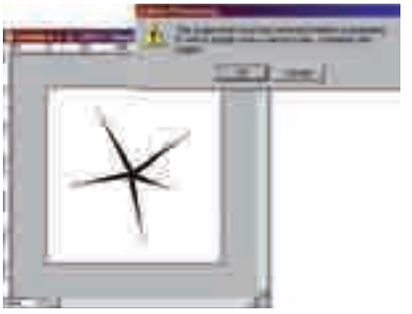
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS3

A BURST OF STARS

Using brushes and creating colourful catchlights

04 The shape appears Set the foreground to black. Click and slightly drag in the middle of the document to see the shape appear. Make sure the star is completely inside the document window. If not, hold the spacebar while the mouse is depressed and move it into the centre. Rotate by dragging in any direction until the angle is askew. For the sake of realism, avoid symmetry.

05 Creating asymmetrical points With the new shape layer created, click the Direct Selection tool (A) and click on one of the star endpoints. The path will become active. Drag the point inward to make it shorter than the others. Now grab another point and pull it out and to one side. Do this for each point until you have some asymmetry built up.



06 Add some blur When the star looks the way you want it to, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. You'll be asked to rasterize your shape layer. Click OK. In the Gaussian Blur dialog, enter 2.5 for the radius. Note: if your image is a higher resolution, enter a higher amount (anywhere from 1-5 is a good setting).

07 Create the brush Go to Edit>Define Custom Brush and give your brush a meaningful name. Now click on the Brush tool (B), then click on the drop-down arrow next to the brush preview in the Options bar and navigate to the last brush in the set. You'll see the new starburst, ready to use.

08 Create more brushes and apply the catchlights Create about five or six brushes as outlined above with differing sizes, shapes and points. Now open your image and create a new layer for each brush application. This way you can set different catchlight colours in the next step. Set the foreground to white, and apply the different brushes in highly reflective surface areas. Click once in each location.

09 Adding a touch of colour Often a catchlight contains the colour of the reflected surface – in our example, the car's red paint or gold from the bumper. Add an Inner Glow layer style (Layer>Layer Style>Inner Glow) with the settings shown above. Sample the glow colour from an area close to the catchlight. Since each starburst is on its own layer, they can be coloured separately.

10 Fine-tuning If a particular catchlight is too strong, change the opacity of its layer to around 70-80%. Use Edit>Free Transform to skew, distort, rotate or scale your starbursts after they are applied for precise fine-tuning. Since they're on their own layers, you can edit each one individually to your heart's content.

Web resource

Online providers

Surprisingly, there are few resources out there for Starburst brushes. One such resource can be found at **www.infobob.com/brush_demo.shtml**. The author of our tutorial has also created a special Starburst brush set for the tutorial at **www.chainstyle.com**.

Image resource

stock.xchng

Thank you to stock.xchng for allowing us to use this sporty little number in the tutorial. You can download the image by following this link: http://www.sxc.hu/photo/120590

Starburst magic

Make full use of brushes

The brushes used here are all variations of the Polygon tool. In one case (Brush Imprint 3), several different stars were put together and combined into a single brush. One click, and multiple starbursts can be applied. Brush Imprint 5 indents the polygon sides by a lesser degree than the others, thereby producing a fatter star.

Be sure to also explore the wide variety of brush options that can be set for each individual brush using the Brush palette (Window>Brushes).

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

- BLACK AND WHITE ADJUSTMENT
- SETTINGS LEVELS ENDPOINTS
- DARKENING/ LIGHTENING WITH CURVES
- DODGING AND BURNING

IMAGE BEFORE

Converting images to black and white using CS3

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Matthew Henry

ON THE CD
IP_0002.jpg, IP_0014.jpg

Photoshop CS3's Black and White adjustment offers a new and refreshingly simple route to monochrome

The conversion of colour images to black and white has, until now, been something of a complex job to do successfully. Over the years, imaging experts have put forward various home-brew recipes involving elaborate processes such as Lab conversion and Image>Calculations, all in an effort to avoid the substandard approaches of basic desaturation or greyscale conversion.

Of all the weird and wonderful methods, the Channel Mixer technique quickly became the favourite, allowing users control over individual colour channels to simulate the lens filters once popular with black and white photographers. It's a method that has stood the test of time, but is still as much a confusing tool as a creative one for many.

So big hoorays then, for the simplification offered by Adobe's new 'Black and White' image adjustment, featured in the latest Photoshop incarnation, CS3. It's found in the usual Image>Adjustment location, and is also thankfully present as an adjustment layer, meaning you can use it as part of a non-destructive workflow. Not only is the new adjustment dialog much more straightforward in use than the Channel Mixer, it also offers you more control and more features.

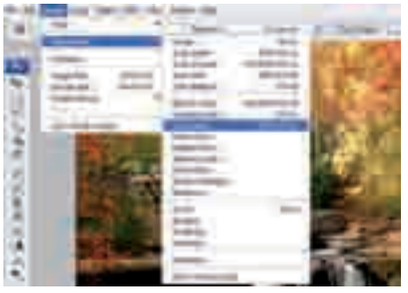
The Red, Green and Blue sliders of the Channel Mixer dialog have now been supplemented with three more (Yellows, Cyans and Magentas), giving you greater control over tonality, and all without the need to ensure that the totals add up to 100 per cent as per the Channel Mixer.

Built-in presets to simulate traditional lens-based filters can be found too (including Infrared), and there's a toning feature included that lets you wash the finished monochrome image with a single colour, and at a saturation of your choice.

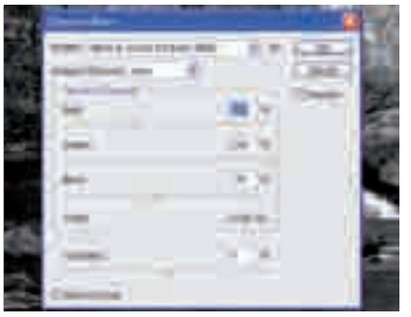
PHOTOSHOP CS3 BLACK AND WHITE ADJUSTMENT

Turn colour into monochrome CS3-style

01 Greyscale conversion Here's black and white conversion at its most basic and most destructive. Image>Mode>Grayscale discards the Red, Green and Blue Channel information to form a new single Grayscale channel. It's the colour channel information which allows you that sort of control over individual tones, so this is definitely a method to avoid.



02 Desaturate Image>Adjustment> Desaturate is another simplistic approach to black and white conversion. It doesn't throw away colour channels, but simply applies a conversion based on preset figures for each channel. So in effect, you've still got no control over individual channels in the conversion. A quick monochrome method if you're not fussed about tones.



03 The Channel Mixer Once the bastion of black and white conversion, it remains a decent option if you don't want to get to know the new Black and White adjustment. CS3 improvements to the Channel Mixer include a 'Total' values indicator so you can ensure all sliders add up to 100 per cent, and lens-filter style presets much like Black and White adjustment.

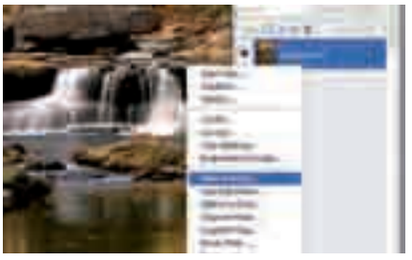
Tip

Levels endpoints

Dragging the black and white sliders inwards to meet info edges on the histogram ensures there are plenty of rich blacks and bright whites in the image. To ensure you don't clip detail, hold Alt/Option while moving each slider to activate the Threshold Clipping Display. If specks of info appear, move the slider back a bit.

THE CORRECT CONVERSION TECHNIQUE

You have a choice of three!



04 Black and White adjustment The new Black and White adjustment is best applied as an adjustment layer, as we can double-click it at any time to alter it. Our original info remains intact on the background layer. Click the half-white, half-black circle at the bottom of the Layers palette and hit Black & White.

05 Default conversion When the dialog first appears, a black and white conversion is applied based on the default settings. In the Presets menu, 'None' is selected. If you're not happy with the default conversion, click Auto to let Photoshop make a judgement for you. If this doesn't do it, try the Preset menu.

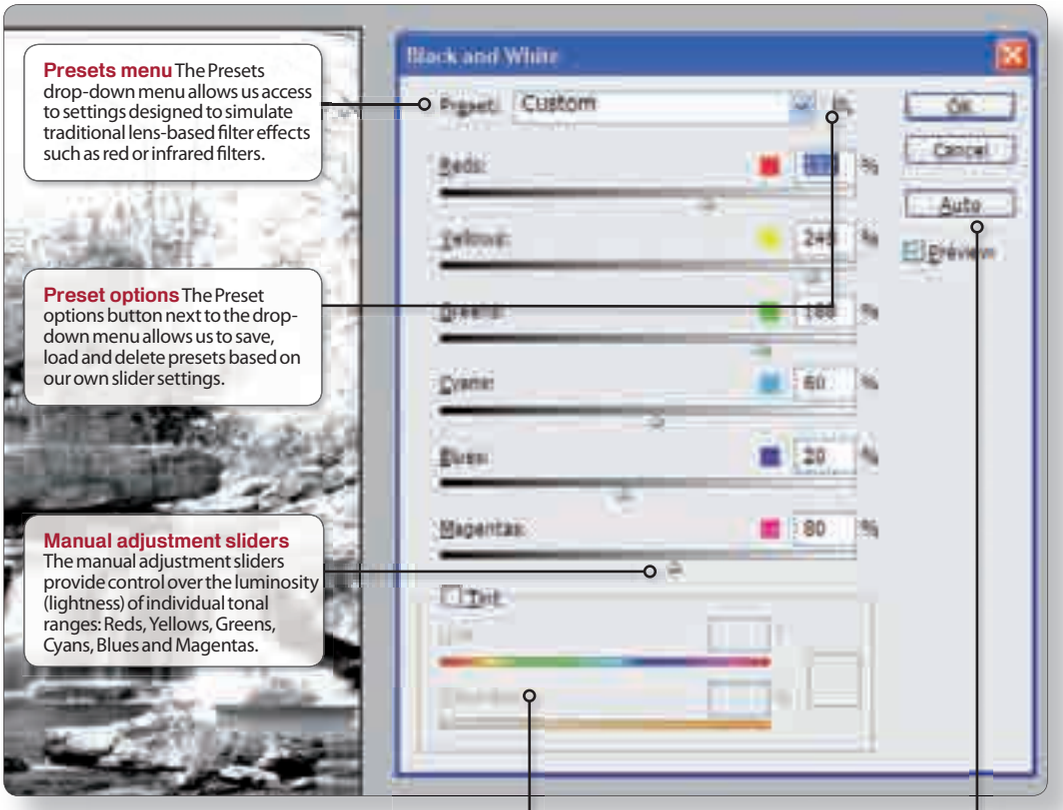
06 Trying out the presets The Presets correspond to various types of lens-based photographic filters, and lighten some tones of an image and darken others. Experiment to see how they affect the image. You can then tweak using the sliders, or hit None to return to the default and alter the sliders from scratch.

07 Manual sliders To really bring the power of this new dialog to life, it's best to get stuck into the sliders. Each slider controls the luminosity (lightness) of a particular range of colours, so we can choose to darken skies, for example, by dropping the Blues. Some will have less effect than others, depending on the colour composition of the original shot.

08 In situ selection An intuitive addition to the dialog is the ability to click anywhere on the image and have the corresponding colour slider automatically selected. We can then simply mouse down and drag left or right (whilst still in the image) to darken or lighten those particular tones.

09 Editing with care

The sliders are very subtle, and they don't have to add up to 100% to avoid a shift in gamma (overall lightness). You might, however, still blow out highlights or lose shadow detail if certain sliders are worked too hard, so use with care.


Black and White
Preset: Custom
OK
Cancel
Auto
Preview
Reds:
Yellows:
Greens:
Cyans:
Blues:
Magentas:
Tint
Presets menu The Presets drop-down menu allows us access to settings designed to simulate traditional lens-based filter effects such as red or infrared filters.
Preset options The Preset options button next to the drop-down menu allows us to save, load and delete presets based on our own slider settings.
Manual adjustment sliders The manual adjustment sliders provide control over the luminosity (lightness) of individual tonal ranges: Reds, Yellows, Greens, Cyans, Blues and Magentas.
Tint feature The Tint feature washes a monochrome image with a single colour. Move the Hue and Saturation sliders to suit.
Auto button The Auto button instructs Photoshop to attempt to guess at suitable conversion settings for a particular image. A good first port of call.

THE ARTISTIC TOUCH

Give the image a sepia tone

10 Finishing our image Because of the colour make-up of this image, only the Reds and Yellows have any significant effect. We achieve the most pleasing result by dropping Yellows down to -35% and boosting Reds +135%.

11 Saving presets As we have quite a few similar autumn scenes, we decided to save this setting as a preset for future use. To do this, click the Preset options button next to the drop-down menu, select Save Preset and give it a name. You can now access the new preset from the drop-down menu at a later date.

12 Toning We'll finish our image with a gentle sepia tone. Ensure the Tint box is checked, and move the Hue slider across to 42 degrees to get the desired sepia colour. It looks too strong at this point, so drop the Saturation to 7% for a much more subtle wash.

13 Hand painting As we've used a Black and White adjustment as an adjustment layer, it comes with its own layer mask (the rectangle next to the main layer icon), selected as default once we OK the dialog. By painting inside the image with a black brush, we can reveal parts of the original colour for a hand-painted effect.

14 Layer mask control Pressing X moves us from black to white if we've got black and white as our foreground and background colours (press D to reset the palette if not), and we can use white to paint the colour out again if we make a mistake or decide to stick with full monochrome.

15 Setting Levels endpoints The final stage with any black and white conversion process is to ensure that overall contrast and luminosity are as desired. To ensure rich deep blacks and bright whites, we add a Levels adjustment layer and check that the black and white sliders meet the info edges. In this case they do, so no need to move them inwards.

16 Lightening with curves The image here still looks a touch dark, so we add a Curves adjustment layer and drag the curve upwards slightly with a single point placed in the middle of the curve. We OK this dialog, then paint some of the Curves adjustment out at the top of the image with a large soft white brush (the mask is selected by default).

17 Burning The lighter area at the top of the image still unbalances the image slightly, so we want to burn it in further. We add another Curves adjustment layer, this time pulling the curve downwards. Next we use Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the mask to black, then paint the darkening back in where desired with a soft white brush.

Tip

Dodging and burning

The final step in our tutorial shows the non-destructive method of dodging and burning (lightening or darkening areas of your image). By using a Curves adjustment layer and its layer mask, we can produce dodging or burning effects (use two separate adjustment layers for dodge and burn) without having to work on any actual pixels, as we'd have to do if we used the Dodge/Burn tools. Use Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert a layer mask to black, then paint in with white.

THE BIG TECHNIQUE

Create buttons for your website

Lee Groombridge tells you everything there is to know about gel buttons for your site

So what is a glass button – more commonly known as a gel button? It's a style of button or graphic that has been made extremely popular with the introduction and rise of the Macintosh OS X system and more recently the Windows Vista system. It's safe to say this style is in fashion – you've no doubt seen this graphic style all over the internet on a variety of sites. The tutorial on these pages will show you how to create the effect from absolute scratch. In future, you won't have to search the web for hours trying to find a button that's as close as possible to the one you actually want and then alter it in Photoshop.

This article will also go one step further and show you a number of styles you can use as a rollover effect when using the graphic as a button. And as a little bonus, we give you a quick three-stepper on seeing your button in action using Dreamweaver. Along with the tutorial, we've also provided four alternative uses and live examples for you to take inspiration from.

Click
The text The placement of the text layer is very important. As you can see, the highlight just touches the top of the text, giving the illusion that the text is inside the glass button. If the text is placed on top of this, the effect is totally lost.
The colours The colours are very important when it comes to this effect. The top colour should be a little darker than you would want the button to be, as it should account for shadow, and the bottom colour should be bright and an almost luminous version of the colour your button is supposed to be, to give the effect of light.
The drop shadow This part of the button is often missed when people create this effect, but in actual fact it's an essential element in finishing it off. It adds that final confirmation to the viewer that the button is in fact three-dimensional.

The light-up rollover

Using Outglow

Out of all the rollover types, this one is probably best suited for an isolated button on a flat coloured background. The reason for this is that the button will take up a lot of space around the actual size of the real button. If you have it too close to another element and you have to chop off the effect, you lose its realistic look. This button graphic is done by using layer effects. If you follow the tutorial on the next page you'll see you have a layer at the bottom of the Photoshop document that's the size of the whole button, and this layer has a drop shadow on it. All you need to do is simply add an Outer Glow effect to the layer to get the effect you want. This type of effect works best on darker backgrounds.

The text emboss rollover

Using the text

This is a common rollover used by people who make modern aqua buttons for applications. The reason for this is that the rollover takes up the exact same space as the original button on the layout. When you create websites in more depth you'll see how advantageous this can be. The effect is produced by creating a layer effect on the text itself. In most cases this works best when the text is not black, because you can create a real feeling of the text being cut out. Create the effect by selecting the text layer and then adding the bevel and emboss (Inner Bevel) layer effect.

The highlight The highlight is the layer at the top of all the others. This layer's purpose is to make the button look shiny and also give the impression of it being three-dimensional. Note how the highlight doesn't go right to the top of the button, to give the glass effect depth.

The gradient The gradient is ultimately what makes the glass effect look three-dimensional. It's important that the gradient is even from the top of the button to the bottom, because it's supposed to be imitating how light would reflect through the object.

Tip

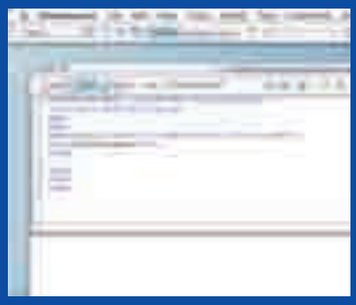
Save as a GIF

The file format you should save your button images out as is GIF. This file format reduces the number of colours used in the image, therefore reducing the file size – something that's very important when creating web graphics.

Introducing Dreamweaver

How to make your buttons interactive

There are many apps that let you build web pages, but here we'll use Dreamweaver. You can download a trial of Dreamweaver from **www.adobe.com**.



01 Get the files ready You first need your two image files (one for the button, one for the rollover) in one folder on your desktop. Now open Dreamweaver and create an HTML document. Call it 'Buttons' and save in the folder with the images.

02 Create the button With the HTML document open, navigate to Insert> Image Object>Rollover Image. A pop-up will appear where you can tell Dreamweaver what the original, the rollover image is and what the button does on click.

03 Test the results With the pop-up filled in, you can test the button to see how your effect looks live. With the HTML doc open, go to File>Preview in Browser. Select your browser. Your page will load up, ready for you to try out your rollover!

Changing colours rollover

Using colours

This is by far the easiest rollover type, but can also be the most effective. All you have to do is change the colour of either the text or the background. If you're changing the colour of the text, it's best to use a lighter colour for the rollover to create an effect such as the button itself lighting up (for example, black text becomes white). If you're going to change the colour of the background layer, it's best to use complementary colours so your rollovers stand out. When changing the background layer, to ensure the gradients match perfectly use the Hue and Saturation filter rather than redrawing the gradient – any change would destroy the effect. Alternatively, you can do both and add a slight outer glow to the text to enhance the lighting-up effect.

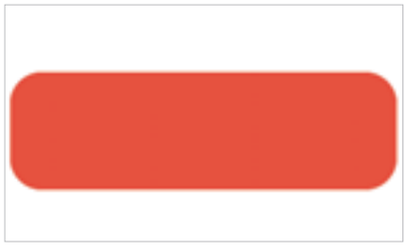
Pressing down the button

Using drop shadows

This form of rollover is popular too, but it's a little more complicated than the others in terms of knowing how to get the effect. First select the bottom layer with the drop shadow on it. Now bring up the Layer Effect palette, then reduce the distance value of the shadow. Next, with the Move tool nudge the button down a couple of pixels and to the right a couple of pixels. It's wise to use Photoshop guides for this type of button rollover so you know exactly how far you've moved the original image, and also to make sure the shadow doesn't alter the size of the image.

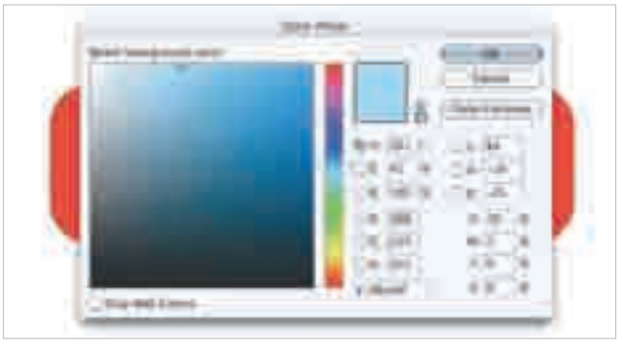
START FROM SCRATCH

Create your shape and colour it in



01 **Drawing the shape** You're starting from scratch, so your very first step will be to draw your shape in Photoshop. Begin by opening up a new document, and then select the Rounded Rectangle Shape tool (U is the keyboard shortcut). Now set the Radius to 50 pixels from the options and then draw a shape on the stage.

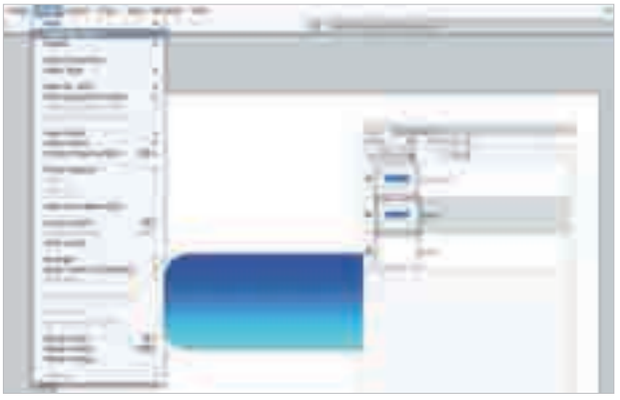
02 **Rasterize** The next step is to rasterize the shape so that you can add a gradient. The current shape is a vector object, and while it is possible to add a gradient to this shape it's easier for this example to rasterize the layer. Select the shape layer and from the Layers palette Ctrl-click (right-click on a PC) and select Rasterize Layer.



03 **Pick a gradient** The next step is to select your colours for the gradient. For this, click on the foreground colour in the Tools palette and select the following values to create a dark blue colour: R: 16, G: 82, B: 173. Now select the background colour from the Tools palette and select the following values to create a lighter blue: R: 150, G: 219, B: 255.

04 **Select the shape** This step will show you a clever shortcut in Photoshop to select a layer's contents. First Apple-click the layer that the shape is in on the Layers palette (Alt-click on a PC) anywhere in the grey area. You will now see that the shape has the 'marching ants' around it, showing the shape is selected.

05 **Add the gradient** The first thing to do before adding the gradient is to make sure the option is set to Foreground to Background in the options of the Gradient tool. Once you have this set, delete the contents of the selection and draw a vertical line with the tool from the top of the shape to the bottom.



06 **Duplicate the layer** Now duplicate the shape layer by going to Layer>Duplicate Layer. Then set your foreground colour to white in the Tools palette by clicking on the colour and setting the values to R: 255, G: 255, B: 255.

The glass bar

Using the effect to create a navigation bar

Our tutorial could easily be adapted to create a bar graphic. This type of graphic can be used as a non-functional design element, or tweaked to create a navigation menu system for a design. This is very fashionable with the redesign of the Apple site over the last few years, and most recently the branding of the Windows Vista system. We've even used this method to create graphics on our own forum. Visit **www.pshopcreative.co.uk** and click through to our forum to see what we mean. To create the graphic just follow the above tutorial, but make the shape a long horizontal rectangle, not a rounded rectangle. In fact, you can skip the first few steps and just draw the shape with the Marquee selection tool!

Don't just use words!

Getting creative with glass

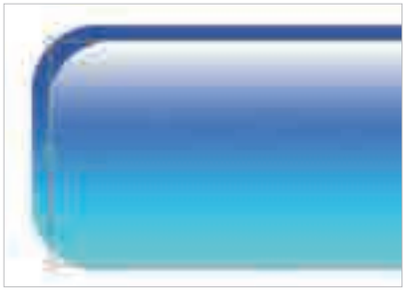
We've focused on showing how to create gel buttons containing text, but our tutorial is easily adapted to icons or buttons with logos. You just need to draw the shape to whatever your icon shape needs to be and replace the text layer in your Photoshop document with a logo graphic. A great example of gel buttons with logos is the Apple site page dedicated to the new iPhone. Visit **www.apple.com/iphone** to see fantastic icons with a number of logos and colours.

BRIGHT AS A BUTTON

Give it a shine and then add some text

07 **Transparent gradient** Now reselect the Gradient tool because we need to change the options for your next gradient fill. In order to create the shine on the button, select the Gradient option Forecolour to Transparent. This should display white to the transparent chequered grid in the options.

08 **Delete and fill** Once you have the correct gradient selected, you need to repeat the earlier steps. Select the new shape layer in the Layers palette. Select the object (Apple-click), delete the contents and draw your gradient from top to bottom. This time however, only draw the line to half the height of the button shape.



09 **Transform** You should now see the button begin to take shape. The next step to help with the effect is to shrink the highlight. Select the highlight layer and go to Edit>Transform>Free Transform. A box will appear around the shine layer. Pull in the sides until you get the desired effect.

Tip

Rollover colours?

The rollover colours you choose are just as important as the main button colour. Always try to go with a diverse colour change (eg red and green) so the user knows that the graphic does something when clicked!

10 **Time to add some text** The text that you add will really begin to make your button look three-dimensional, because you add it above the coloured shape but below the highlight layer. First select the Text tool (T) and then create some black text for your button. In our example in the above screenshot we have used the Arial font and the words 'Click me'.

11 **Add a shadow** The final step to making the button look as though it has depth is to add a drop shadow. For this you are going to need to add a layer effect to the coloured shape layer. Select the layer in the Layers palette and click the small 'f' logo (Add Layer Style).

12 **Finishing touches** Now you have the Layer Style dialog box up, select the Drop Shadow option by ticking the box. Set the colour of the shadow a little darker that the darkest colour of your button, and play with the values to create the effect. You don't want a shadow too soft or hard, and you don't want its distance to be too far away.

The gel button

The simplest form but so effective

As you well know, this is probably one of the most common uses for this type of graphic. You can see examples all over the internet. However, now you've learnt how to create the glass graphic from scratch using the tutorial over these pages, you can place whatever text you like inside the button and also make the button whatever shape you wish to suit your website designs. In keeping with our branded graphics, the Imagine Publishing eShop uses gel buttons for the Add to Basket button, so visit **www.imagineshop.co.uk** to see a live example.

Icons

Taking the glass effect one step further

As you can see, this method of drawing gel or glass buttons isn't the only way. There are a number of different methods and final effects possible. The effect we created is by far the most versatile style and has a variety of uses. However, by visiting sites like the new Windows Vista site, you'll see that the icons take it one step further. Visit **www.microsoft.com/windows/products/windowsvista/default.mspx** to see icons that have been created for Windows Vista; you'll see a few more technically correct reflections to make them look even more shiny and three-dimensional. Using the icons from this site and with the knowledge gained over these pages, try and recreate the Click Me button and add some more reflections.

Take your first steps in pixel art

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
Two to three hours

YOUR EXPERT
Totto Renna

ON THE CD
Key_city.tif

Forget whatever you might have thought about pixel art being retro. It's back – and it's colourful, modern and hipper than ever. . .

The pixel style has been enjoying something of a revival in recent years. The first instances of it were used to make the early videogames, but it was soon replaced by a quicker and more practical style: the three-dimensional graphic.

Undoubtedly less interesting, the 3D graphic came into the limelight in the videogame industry and can now also be seen in movies. However, thanks to the recent success of many designers, pixel art is having a renaissance in a fresh new form that belies its outdated origins.

Pixel art needs as much time as traditional painting. Every feature of the illustration and every area of colour must be applied manually, and if, say, you want to enlarge an image, you have to start drawing it all over again.

In some ways, pixels influence the way you create, because every element is drawn on the computer. You have to constantly think about how you can represent objects, people and faces, as it's not easy using tiny coloured squares. You can use only a limited number of them too, so it's almost as if you're 'suggesting' the image with the pixels. This challenge is what makes pixel art so satisfying.

One of the problems when working for the web is that every image must have the lowest size possible in KB to open on a web page quickly – and this makes the small size of pixel art very appealing. The pixels force you to synthesize the forms and colours of the subject you want to depict, obtaining an icon in the process and an idealisation as a result.

In this tutorial we aim to inspire you to create your own pixel art. There's only space to create one block of our pixel city, but once you've done that you'll understand the fundamentals of pixel art, and will be ready to finish your own version of the city.

GETTING STARTED
Lay the foundations

01 Making a fresh start The first thing you need to know about pixel art is that in order to keep it neat, you need to keep it isometric. That means at angles of approximately 30°, basically, or one pixel up or down and two pixels right or left. Stick with that principle and all will be well.

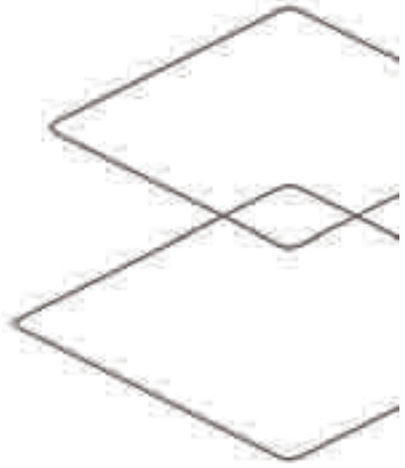
02 The sidewalk We'll begin this job with the basic shape that will be the sidewalk of our block. First of all we'll need to draw a big square with smooth corners in an isometric way – as shown above.

03 Do it over again Next, duplicate the layer you have just created, only this time move it vertically by just a couple of pixels. Now join the extremities of the two figures together.

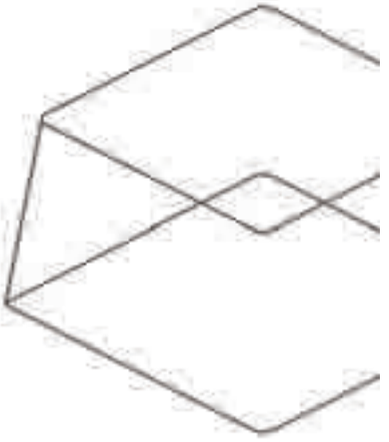
04 Into the light Remove the hidden lines, which should not be visible, and colour every side with different colour intensities, creating the lights and shadows for the object in the process. Remember to colour the lines at the edges towards the front with a light colour intensity to emphasise the three-dimensionality of the figure.

05 Levelling up Create a new layer and draw a square similar to the first one – but smaller – and place it to the centre of the sidewalk's upper face. Once you've coloured the inside, the sidewalk will be ready.

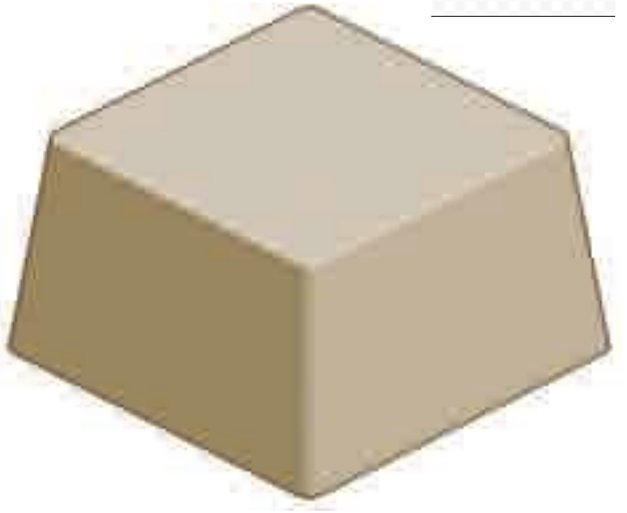
06 Creating the key We'll now continue by building the block of our illustration. Using the same procedures as before, create a new layer and then draw a square with smooth angles again. Don't worry if you don't feel comfortable with your pixels yet – only a lot of trial and error will get you to the comfortable stage!



07 Sizing up With the early elements in place, it's time to develop things further to make them more realistic. Do so by drawing a smaller version of the piece previously created and placing it vertically, at some distance from your other square.



08 Come together With the two objects looking like the image in the previous step, it's time to take it to the next level. Join the two extremities of the figures, making sure that the joining outline is as smooth as it can possibly be, and creating something like the above in the process.



09 Soft steps Clear the figure just created of the lines that don't have to be visible, and colour the object by adding lights and shadows. In this case, in order to better underline the curve of the key edge, soften the passage from the light zone to the shadow zone, simulating a light shade.

Tip

Configuration conundrum

Open Photoshop and create a new document of 600 x 600 pixels. Grab the Select tool and disable Anti-alias, Go to Photoshop > Preferences > Units & Rulers and lay out the rulers in pixel modality. Most of the time we'll view the image enlarged in order to focus on the details, but it'll also be helpful to see the image at its natural size. It'll be handy to view both images on the open document. Choose Window > Document > New Window. Now, any change made in one image will also appear in the other.

Tip

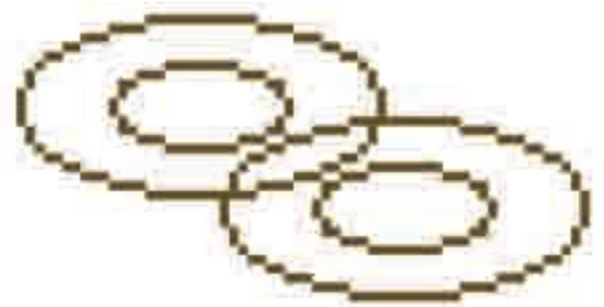
The basis of isometric art

The traditional isometric view is based on an angle of 30°. However, this angle produces a confused and irregular line on the computer monitor. In pixel art you conventionally use an angle of 25.65°, but don't be alarmed because to draw a line with this inclination you have only to remember this formula: one vertically and two horizontally. The example below was made by arranging two pixels, then moving upwards a single pixel and arranging the next two pixels after the former ones.

GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES

Using mathematical principles

10 In sync In order to create the letter 'C' to insert on the key you've just drawn, you will need to draw two concentric circles on a new layer. In this case the height of each circle must be half its length.



11 Mathematical methodology Duplicate the layer and then move the figure down and left. Do this by shifting and considering the angle of 25.565°, thus using the method 'one vertically and two horizontally' (see boxout on the left).

12 Circular meanderings Your next step is to join the four circles with lines tangent to the curves. Make sure that you use the technique we recommended of one pixel vertically and two pixels horizontally again. We will call this one the '1/2' method for short.

13 Configure your figure Now it's time to clear the figure which you just created of the lines that you don't want to be able to see. This time it's going to look more complex, but at the end you should have the result you can see in the screenshot above.

14 Transform your figure The shape that you have just drawn will look like an 'O' at this stage. What you need to do now is cut it in two, with two lines using the '1/2' method.

15 Invisibility cloak Once again, clear the figure of the lines that don't need to be visible, before colouring it in the same colour as the outline. At this point, the letter is ready to be placed on the key that you've produced previously.

16 Seeing the light You might realise that the traffic light looks more complicated than it really is. You'll find that most objects break down into simple objects, such as this parallelepiped (a prism where all the faces are parallelograms), or circles or cylinders. Now draw the parallelepiped with the method that you already know.

17 Squash it in Create a new layer and draw a slightly squashed circle that will later become one of the lights for the traffic light. Duplicate this layer twice, and place the three circles in a straight line and at equal distances away from each other.

LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE

Create the traffic lights

18 Colour up Start colouring each side of the object with a different colour intensity in order to differentiate the light zones from the shadow zones.

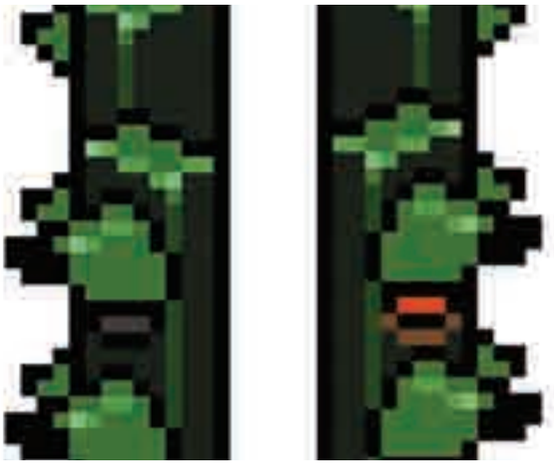
19 Green means go At this point, you need to add some details to the figure as well as colouring the lights of the traffic lights.

20 Be bold Next, draw the head of the light on a new layer. In this case you can draw the object freehand, rounding off roughly the forms and colouring until you obtain the result which you can see in the above image.

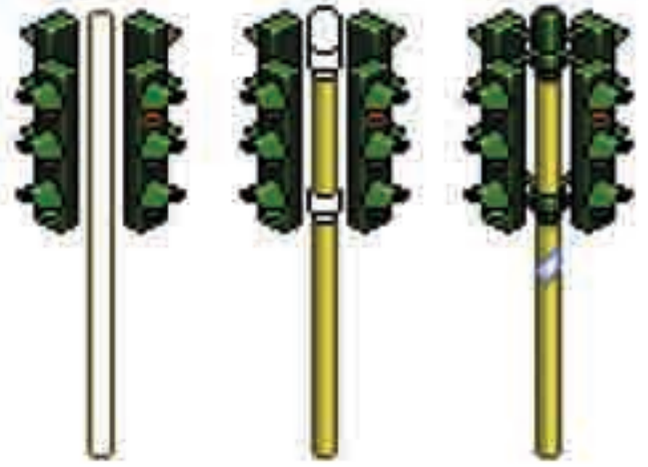
21 Light up Duplicate the layer twice and place the three objects on top of the three lights that you drew previously.

22 A touch of class After duplicating the layer, reflect the object by clicking on Reflect Horizontally. Turn on the red light to create a more realistic illustration.

23 Ahead of the pack Create a copy of the parallelepiped created in step 17, and after drawing the head of the light, move the layer under the former one and place it as shown.



24 Find and deliver Duplicate the layer and reflect the object by clicking on, once again, Reflect Horizontally. Move the layer under the former one and locate it as illustrated in the figure.



25 Practice makes perfect In comparison, the traffic light pole should now look simple to make. Add some details, such as the sticker, to make it more realistic.

Tip

Basic figure number 1

The easiest way to draw a cube or a parallelepiped is to create the lower face of the object then duplicate the layer by choosing Layer > Duplicate Layer. Join the two extremities of the faces and you will have your figure. The result is still a bit rough, but deleting the superfluous lines and colouring the faces of the cube with colours of different intensity will ensure that everything will take a more winning shape. Finally, give a light colour to the edge line facing forward, and you will have a great cube in true pixel-style.

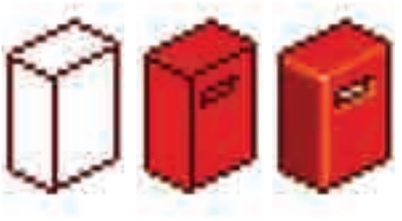
Tip

Basic figure number 2

With the method demonstrated previously, you can create any solid – a pyramid for example, a cylinder, a sphere or anything else your heart desires. Circles are probably the most complex figures to draw in an isometric view. In order to draw a circle – as below – choose Select to create a circular shape and then make its length twice its height.

SELLING POINT

Creating and hanging the sign



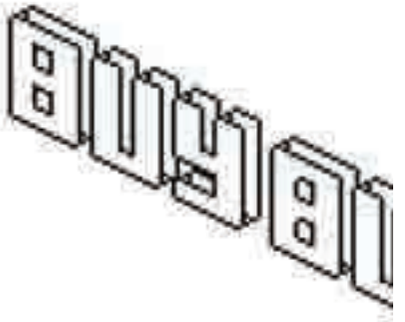
26 **In the post** Let's move on and create the mailbox. First draw a parallelepiped, and then the hole of the mailbox. Next, colour the object in order to make it look more realistic.

27 **Type right** To make it as realistic as possible, select the Text tool. After making sure that the Anti-alias function is disabled, choose a font and type. In the above example, we used a bitmap font, which is very useful for creating text in a pixel style.

28 **Make it fit** Go to the Photoshop menu and select Edit>Free Transform>Distort, then put the text at the isometric angle of 25.565°. After the transformation, you'll find the text border will be much smoother.

29 **Smooth style** After disabling the Anti-alias function, use the Magic Wand tool to select the word and then, on a new layer, select Stroke. This way you have created the text in pixel style, although when it's viewed up close it reveals some imperfections.

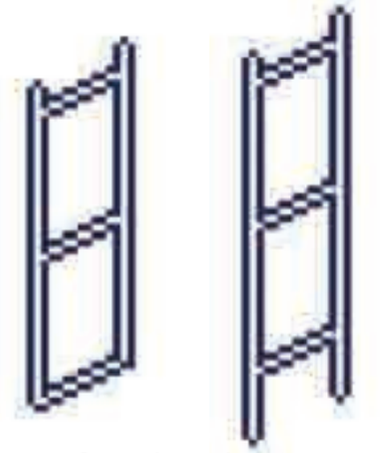
30 **A lesson learnt** Actually, the process just shown is not perfect – if it were perfect, we would draw everything that way. All of which means we need to do some more correction to come up with the final result.



31 **Hang your sign** Duplicate the level and move it forward in order to create the thickness of the sign, then join the outlines using the '1/2' method.

32 **Tidy up** The next step is to fill the sign with colour on every side and then delete the pixels that we don't want to be visible inside the isometric text.

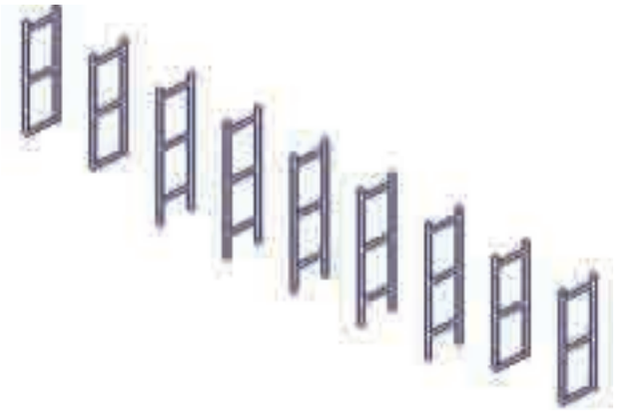
33 **Your choice** Tidy anything else up that still looks messy and the text will finally be ready. Pixel art is so mathematical that its success really lies in the finer details – make your images both personal and technically perfect and you'll be on to a winner.



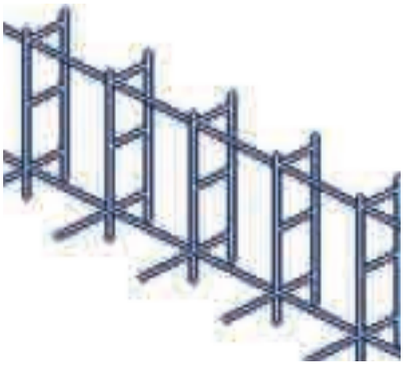
34 **Separation anxiety** The support structure of our bright sign is modular, so we will only need to create a few elements and then duplicate them. Start with the objects depicted above – they should be reasonably simple for you by now! Keep them on two separate layers.

THE FINAL ELEMENT

Start creating the jeep

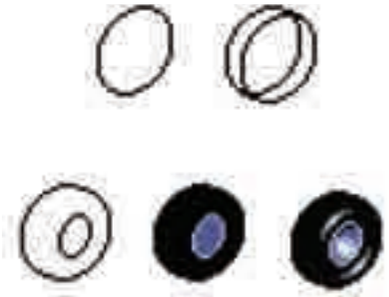


35 **Straighten up** Duplicate and move the various layers, always taking into account the '1/2' method, until you obtain the image above as a final result.



36 **Plenty of support** On a new layer, draw the support tubes for the advertising that will light up your pixel world. At this point, colour them in and then put in place the necessary lights.

37 **Sell yourself** By now, it should be easy for you to put the rest of the sign together. Duplicate and move the layer of the advertisement until you have one for every tube of the structure, and you will have the above as a finished product.



38 **The jeep** This element completes our block. Don't be alarmed by its complexity – it's easier than it looks. Start with the tyres. Draw an inclined, squashed circle, duplicate its layer, then move it forward with the '1/2' method. Clear the figure from the red curves that we don't want visible and colour the tyre, following the above example.

39 **Personal touches** Now it's time for you to complete the figure. The first step is to duplicate the layer more than once, and then you can place the tyres neatly into position.

40 **Up, up and away** With things beginning to take shape, let's start putting the various elements together. On a higher layer than the tyres, draw a simple parallelepiped and add colours and lights.

41 **Curve action** Trace two curves on the long side of the parallelepiped (for clarity, do it in bright red). You will need this as a guide to 'dig' the hollow for the tyres.

42 **Make your changes** With the Rubber tool selected, as well as the Anti-alias option disabled, cancel the pixels inside the red curve. Once finished, you can re-colour the two red strokes in black.

Tip

Prevent clots

You will have to put the bits and pieces very near each other, and it's important to avoid the lines forming what some call 'clots'. It's not always possible to avoid them, but the fewer clots there are the better your final result will be.

Tip

Resize pieces of pixel art

We've already mentioned that if you decide to resize an image you have to draw it all over again. This means you have to work with precise measurements from the beginning. The only possibility, if you're going to risk it, is to enlarge the image by making it double, triple, even quadruple the size. Select Image>Image Size, and when inserting the new measurements always remember to choose Resample Image from the Nearest Neighbor menu, because this will avoid creating any of those annoying Anti-alias effects that are the enemy of pixel art.

NICE SET OF WHEELS

Add the finishing touches to your jeep

43 **Your own wonder** Now create a new layer and then draw a trunk of a pyramid, using all the same methods as before.

44 **Colourful detail** Next, colour the figure, differentiating the part that will be the hood of the jeep. Look carefully at the version above and copy anything you need to.

45 **See-through** Now that the structure is complete, you can colour in the car windows. Take care with this, because reflective surfaces can add a real wow factor when done right.

46 **Take pride in your work** Add some more detail, such as the the headlights, the car doors and the mirrors, and once that's done the jeep will be finished.

47 **Placing the objects** Once the jeep is completed you will have all the elements needed to compose the block. Remember that precision is the key to pixel success, and that you need to avoid 'clots' of pixels, which can look truly awful.

48 **Admire your work** Once it's visible and all the layers are placed on the objects, you'll have your result. As you'll notice, we added a shadow to make it look more realistic. Now you have all the elements and the know-how to draw more blocks – the only limit is your imagination!

eMag

Warping graphics onto objects

Create quick graphics with a convincing wrap-around using Photoshop's Transform tools

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

- WARP COMMAND
- FREE TRANSFORM
- CLIPPING MASKS
- PATHS

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Emma Cake

ON THE CD
'final.psd', 'label'

Creating convincing warp graphics in Photoshop may sound like an extremely professional technique that requires not only a lot of skill but time as well – but the truth is it's a fairly basic procedure that once you've mastered can be applied to a whole plethora of illustrative projects. There are only two basic source materials you'll need to complete a project such as this: the first is a base image that suggests a bit of curvature, and the second is a flat graphic to manipulate.

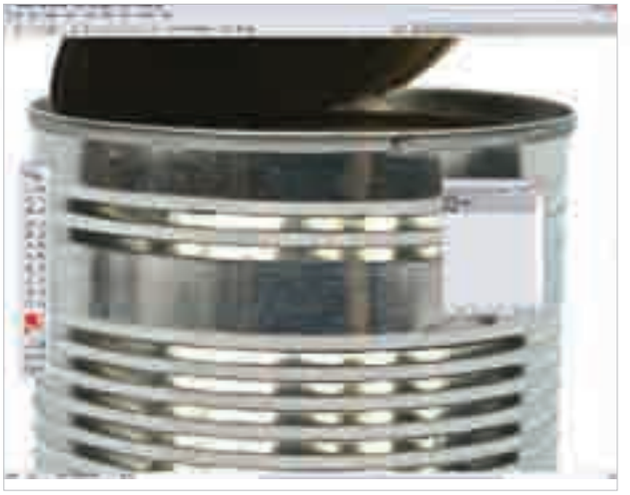
In this short step-by-step we're going to show you how to mock up a very basic food tin. Armed with only a flat label and a few menu commands you will find how you can artificially wrap the label around the can.

The techniques used throughout these steps can be used to add detail to any cylindrical shape, although it's worth pointing out that the warp settings used in this step-by-step may need a few adjustments depending on the angle of your source can photograph. On the CD you will find the 'label' image to use in your warp technique. However, once you've got the hang of the principal procedures we suggest you try making your own labels for an extra personal touch.

FINDING YOUR PATH

Draw a path around the can

01 Can path We're going to need to set a path around the tin can to give us something to work with once we've established the warp settings on our graphic. With a tin can image open, display the Paths palette and Create a New Path. With the Pen tool draw a path around the edge of the tin, making sure you catch any ridges to give it detail.

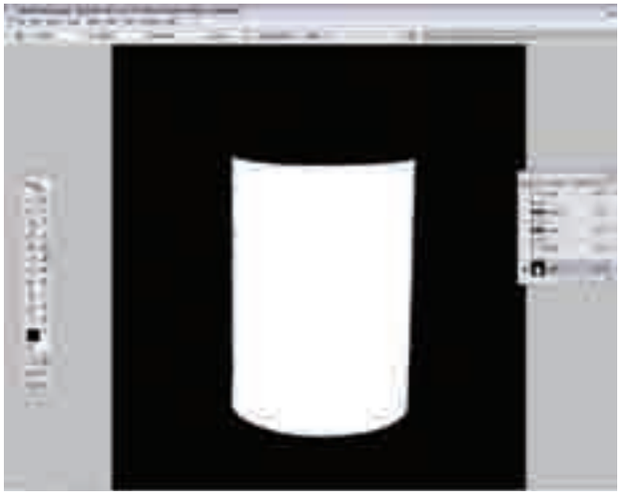


02 Careful pathing Think about where a label would go on a real tin can. There's no point in creating a path around the lid, can pull or the lower ridge, so just draw the path around the main section of the tin can avoiding these paths. Once done, right-click on this path, select Create Selection and keep the feather setting of 0 pixels.

WORKS WITH | ADOBE PHOTOSHOP CS2

WARP SMART OBJECT GRAPHICS

Use your paths, masks, Smart Objects and Warp command to create curved graphics



03 Set masking With the selection active, hit Ctrl+C to copy the main section. Create a layer called 'Can' and Ctrl+V to paste this image on top of the original photo. Go back to the Paths palette and create a selection again. Open the Channels Palette and create a layer. Paste this selection in and hit the Save Selection as Channel button to create a mask.

04 Paste your Smart Object Open the soup label graphic on the CD, create a selection around the label and copy it (Ctrl+C). Paste this selection onto a new layer and you will notice that a pop-up menu opens asking you to define the paste by type. Choose Smart Object. Once you've positioned it roughly over the area of the can you want to decorate, click outside of the canvas for the graphic to render.

05 Warp factor Here's where the fun begins. With your Smart Object layer selected, choose the upper toolbar options Edit>Transform>Warp. You will notice that the image is divided into nine sections with an overlaid grid. Open the preset options and choose Arch (don't confuse this with 'Arc'). You'll notice that the graphic is curving in the wrong direction, but we'll soon fix this.

06 Give it a bend Adjust the Bend to -25% and the graphic will automatically invert its curve. You can make a good guess for the bend need by lining the top of the graphic up with the curve of the upper can line. Once you're happy, press the button Switch Between Free Transform and Warp Modes.

07 Free Transform You're now back to a Free Transform, so with the Shift button held down, use the corner markers to shrink your graphic down appropriately and position it so it looks convincing over your can. When you're happy, click outside the canvas and choose Place.

08 Final tweaks Go back to Transform> Warp and hit Custom Warp. Use the markers to fine-tune the curve of the label. Finally, right-click your Smart Object layer and pick Create Clipping Mask. The label will automatically be shaped to fit the path you created around the edge of the can. Adjust the Fill of this layer to 99% to allow some of the texture of to show through.

Tip

Warp deactivated

If, when you come to applying a warp transform to your Smart Object, the Warp command is deactivated, right-click on your Smart Object layer and select the option Group Into New Smart Layer. This should reset the options to allow you to experiment with the Transform command.

Tip

Convincing lighting

Mastering your warping is only a small part of creating a convincing graphic. A good way of adding great detail to your image is to apply a gradient. To do this, add a new layer and draw a gradient using the Gradient tool. Adjust the blending mode and opacity to experiment with your light effects. Your clipping mask should still be obtainable if you right-click on this newly created gradient layer.

Creating textures

Create your own textures and use them in your artwork to give you that extra dimension

Photoshop comes packaged with plenty of textures – but let's be honest, some of them aren't that good and others have been used to death.

So how do you get around this shortfall in packaged resources? You create your own of course! The easiest and quickest way of creating your own textures is to find a source photo and apply a series of filters over the top of it. Of course, it helps if you have a texture in mind before you begin.

Textures are a really versatile resource to use within Photoshop, and one common way to incorporate them is to use them as patterns and apply them through the Pattern Overlay layer effect. When creating your own patterns using textures, it's vital that the edges at the top and bottom fit together perfectly (the sides as well). If you don't pay attention to the seams, the repeated pattern can stand out like a thumb hit with a hammer and will look fake.

Another thing to watch out for is perspective. Within an image, specific textures can often appear too flat. This guide will show you how combining layers will give your textures a more realistic edge.

Your free CD has a folder with photos intended for use as textures, so we'll take you through the process of creating a texture and using it as a pattern or a standalone layer.

Lighting If your texture is in a 3D space or there is a gradient behind it, you might need to apply a lighting effect to prevent it from appearing flat. Try using the Lighting Effects filter to see how this can help your textures.

Defining your textures Get your textures into Photoshop and save them as a pattern set, so you always have a reference. Open your images in Photoshop and from the Edit menu select Define Pattern, choose a relevant name and hit OK. Once you have all of your textures defined, open your Preset Manager, also in the Edit menu, select all the thumbnails and hit the Save button. Now you will always have a copy of your bespoke textures.

Texturizer filters

Using your textures in a filter

From the CD provided, locate the textures found in the Resources section and drag them to your image library into a folder called Textures. It's always a good habit to work from your hard drive rather than a CD, because you will always have a copy of the image. Open the Texturizer filter, and in the drop-down menu select Load Texture. Remember, the Texturizer only works with PSD files, so you will have to convert all of your images that you wish to use into this format. And it's as simple as that – adjust the sliders to alter the scale, relief, direction and invert if necessary.

Pattern textures

Use the Pattern layer effect

The Texturizer filter is great – it gives a lot of control over how the texture is applied, but it removes the colour as it works on a contrasted basis much like the Threshold function. To use a texture as a pattern, you must first define the pattern. Open your texture (any file format), select from the menu Edit>Define Pattern, pick a relevant name and hit OK. Create a new layer and add a Pattern Overlay layer effect; adjust the scale and blend mode as needed. Note, this option doesn't allow for directional change.

Blend modes To ensure that your texture is placed perfectly in your artwork, use the blend mode either in the Layers palette, in the Layer Effect menu or by fading the filter. Adjusting the opacity will also help.

Transform textures

Apply the correct perspective

The two ways of applying bespoke textures don't let you change the angle, rotation, perspective or location. Both methods outlined will give you some control, but are far from perfect. The best option is to place your texture on a dedicated layer and transform it to follow the line of perspective, then apply it to the object by grouping layers. This applies a mask cropping away unused parts of the textures, giving you the most control, and is best used when working in 3D spaces.

Tip

Free textures

Every issue of *Photoshop Creative* comes with a free resource CD packed full of useful utilities, from stock photos, brushes and of course free textures for you to use as you see fit. Drag them into your library and add them to your artwork to give that extra dimension. Use one of the outlined methods to fix them to a layer.

Tip

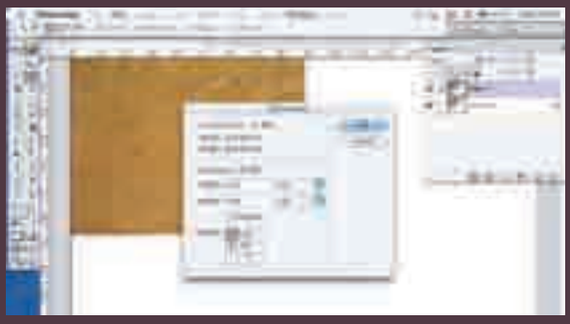
Group layers

Grouping a layer with a texture will enable you to use the image as a unique layer. Position the texture above the layer you wish it to be applied to by holding down the Alt key and clicking between the two layers (the cursor should change to an arrow and two concentric circles) or select Layer > Group With Previous.

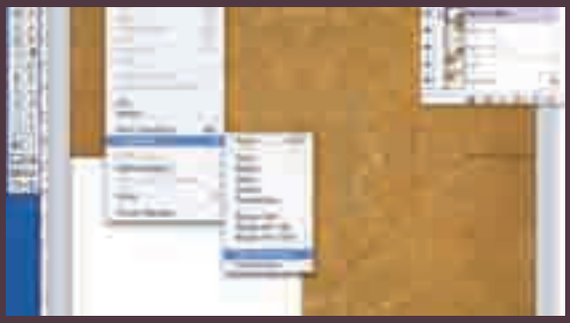
Seamless textures

Tiling and cloning

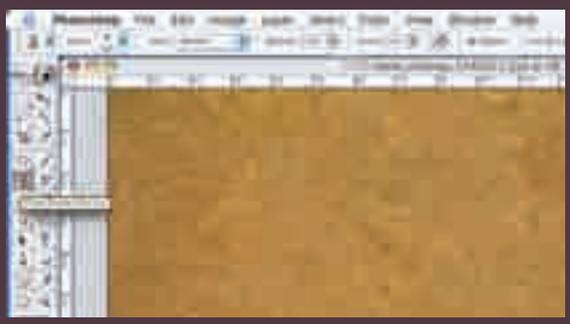
When applying textures using either the Texturizer or Pattern layer methods, a tiling effect appears where the top meets the bottom and the left meets the right. This can be overcome with some simple tiling and cloning…



01 **Open your texture** Open your texture image in Photoshop and duplicate the layer (Command/Ctrl+J). Open the Canvas Size function and select the top left-hand corner box to anchor your image in the top left corner. Now double the width and the height of the document.



02 **Flip and flop** Flip the layer on the horizontal axis and position to the right of the original image. Duplicate the layer again and flip on the vertical axis then position below the second layer. Duplicate this layer, flip on the horizontal axis and position in the last space.



03 **Merge and clone** Your image will now fit together perfectly, but there is a mirrored effect. Flatten the document and select the Clone tool, hold down the Alt key and select a source point, then begin to spread the texture throughout the document, trying to keep away from the edges.

Create your own digital scrapbook

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
45 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
George Cairns

ON THE CD
Source files

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

- CREATING AND EDITING BRUSH TIPS
- ADJUSTING LAYER STYLES
- PRODUCE ATTRACTIVE BORDERS
- FAKING 3D OBJECTS

Give your digital photos the 'old-school' treatment by presenting them in an attractive digital scrapbook

There are plenty of ways to share your digital photos. You can pop them online in web galleries or print them out and stick them in a photo album.

An attractive alternative to these run-of-the-mill options is to create a digital scrapbook. Scrapbooks are a wonderful way of celebrating an event by mixing photos alongside souvenirs from the occasion. By placing objects and photos side by side, you can create a visual feast in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

A scrapbook is a great excuse to include bits of memorabilia that help capture the flavour of the event, such as wedding invitations, gift tags and confetti. All these bits and bobs help embellish your photos and create a rich variety of colours and textures.

We'll show you how to scan in real objects to augment your photos, as well as demonstrate how to create scrapbook-style objects from scratch. Along the way you'll learn how to modify brush tips to spray confetti wherever you like, as well as ways to create a variety of different photo mounts (and even digital sticky tape!). You'll also get to play with patterns and use layer styles to create realistic looking 3D objects.

In the following walkthrough we'll create a scrapbook that celebrates a wedding. You can adapt the techniques we cover to create a scrapbook dedicated to any event or subject matter. For a birthday scrapbook you can scan in gift-wrap and even a lock of your baby's hair, for example.

You can use our wedding scrapbook tutorial as a creative springboard and produce scrapbooks with any theme. These digital versions of a traditional technique can be printed and mounted in a real album, or you can use them to enhance your website design with a retro look.

HAPPY
COUPLE

Tip

Take a closer look

A creative project like a digital scrapbook can consist of dozens of layers – many of which contain a small object such as a piece of virtual cellotape! By default each layer thumbnail shows you the entire layer including any transparency. This makes it almost impossible to identify certain layers using the thumbnail. Luckily, you can make the Layers palette ignore empty areas by clicking on the Palette Options menu and choosing Layer Bounds. This will help you see each layer's content more clearly.

CREATING THE BACKGROUND TEXTURES

Use real objects as a source for richly detailed background (and foreground) textures

01 Create a new file In Photoshop go to File>New. Call the document 'Background'. Set the units to mm; set Width to 305; set Height to 295; set Resolution to 300; set Mode to RGB.; finally, set background to Transparent. By creating a document of these dimensions you can use the same brush sizes that we'll describe in later steps.

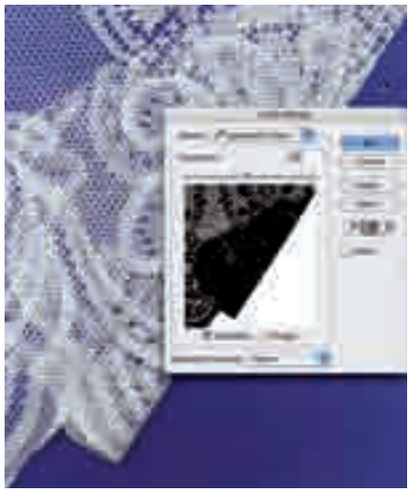
02 Define a pattern Open the file Hessian.jpg from your CD. This chunk of carpet sample has been scanned in. Select the Rectangular Marquee tool (M). Hold down the Shift key to constrain the marquee and draw a square shape over the texture. Go to Edit>Define Pattern. In the Pattern Name dialog window type in 'Hessian Background Texture'. Now click OK.

03 Pick a colour Go back to your empty Background document. Go to the Layers palette and label the empty layer 'Background Texture'. Click on the Foreground Color in the Toolbox to open the Color picker. Choose a warm cream colour with an RGB value of R: 242, G: 233 and B: 2505., and then click OK.

04 Layer styles Edit>Fill the Background Texture layer with the cream colour. To add a texture to the cream colour, click on the Add a Layer Style icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Choose Pattern Overlay from the list of styles. The default blue Bubble pattern will fill the work area.

05 Pick a pattern Click on the Pattern picker for a list of pattern thumbnails. Scroll down to the Hessian Background Texture pattern you created in step 2 and click on it. The background will change to display this pattern. Drag the Scale slider down to 30%. Reduce Opacity to 50% to blend the pattern with the cream coloured layer. Click OK.

06 Isolate the lace To create a multi-layered scrapbook we'll add some scanned lace. Open Lace.jpg. To remove the blue background and create transparent holes in the lace, go to Select>Color Range. Grab the middle Eyedropper tool and click a few times to add different shades of blue to the selection. The unselected lace will appear as black.



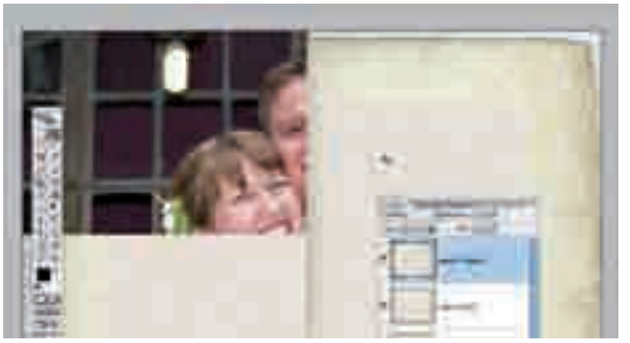
07 Copy the lace Now click OK. The 'marching ants' will appear around every blue pixel. Go to Select>Inverse to isolate the lace. Go to Edit>Copy to copy it. Go back to your main scrapbook document and Edit>Paste the copied lace into the file. It will automatically appear on a new layer. Label the new layer 'Lace'.

08 Transform it! The Lace layer is too big, so go to Edit>Free Transform. Hold down Shift to constrain the layer and drag a corner handle to scale it down to 62%. You can see the Width and Height scale percentage values in the Options bar. Move the cursor outside of the bounding box and drag it to rotate the lace as shown.

THAT'S TORN IT!

Add wear and tear to your pristine digital pictures using scanned textures

09 **Add a torn texture** Open Torn.jpg. Go to Select>All then Edit>Copy the scanned torn paper texture. Open HappyCouple.jpg and Edit>Paste the torn texture onto a new layer. Use the Move tool (V) to position the torn paper layer at the bottom left of the frame.



10 **Copy and transform** Drag the torn paper layer's thumbnail onto the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette to duplicate it. Go to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal to create a mirrored version. Use the Move tool to place the flipped paper in the bottom right corner. Now duplicate this layer and flip it vertically to create a top right corner.

11 **Merge and cut** Duplicate and flip the top right corner to create a fourth corner. Hold Shift and click on the four torn paper layer thumbnails to select them. Now go to Layer>Merge Layers to turn the four torn paper layers into one. Use the Rectangular Marquee to draw a rectangle inside the torn paper layer. Edit>Cut to remove the selection.

12 **Scatter!** The scanned paper border's edges look nicely worn, but the edge of the photo is too sharp. Select the Eraser tool, click the Brush Preset picker in the Options bar and scroll down to the Scatter 59 Pixels brush. Use this to spray out parts of the photo's straight edges.

13 **Warp factor** Go to Edit>Flatten Image. Double-click on the flattened thumbnail. Go to Edit>Transform>Warp. A warp grid will appear. Drag its transform handles to make the top right corner curve down. Make the right side curve inwards. This will give a 3D look.

14 **Add a gradient** To darken the curling corner, select the Gradient tool (G). Press D to change the foreground colour to black. Go to the Gradient picker in the Options bar and choose a Foreground to Transparent preset. Create a new layer and click-drag the Gradient tool diagonally from the top right corner. Lastly, set the Gradient layer's blending mode to Overlay.

15 **Delete the background** Target the torn photo layer's thumbnail. Select the Magic Wand tool (W). Hold Shift and click to add unwanted background pixels. Hit Backspace to delete the selection. Target the Gradient layer: hit Backspace again to delete parts of the gradient that don't overlap the photo. Merge the layers.

Tip

Label it

A large project like your digital scrapbook can be a nightmare to manage if you slip into bad habits. Start as you mean to go on and label every layer that you create. It's much easier to spot a drawing pin's shadow if the layer is labelled 'pin shadow' instead of Layer 2 copy. A few seconds labelling a layer will save you from minutes of searching through the layer stack for a specific layer. Be nice to your future self and label those layers now!

Tip

Group it

The ring tie in step 20 consists of four different layers, which clutter up the Layers palette. Shift-click on these layers and choose Layer>New>Group From Layers. This tucks the multiple layers into a single space-saving folder. You can then duplicate the ring tie and all its components by dragging the folder onto the Layers palette's Create a New Layer icon. Grouping layers makes your project much more manageable.

Tip

Sharing layer styles

There are dozens of ways you can use layer styles to give scanned objects extra depth and texture. This involves tinkering around with the various layer style attributes. Once you've set up a pile of layer style effects you can apply them to other layers instantly. Hold down Alt and drag the Effects layer style icon from one layer thumbnail to another. All of the layer styles will appear on the target layer as well as remaining with the source layer.

STICKY SITUATIONS

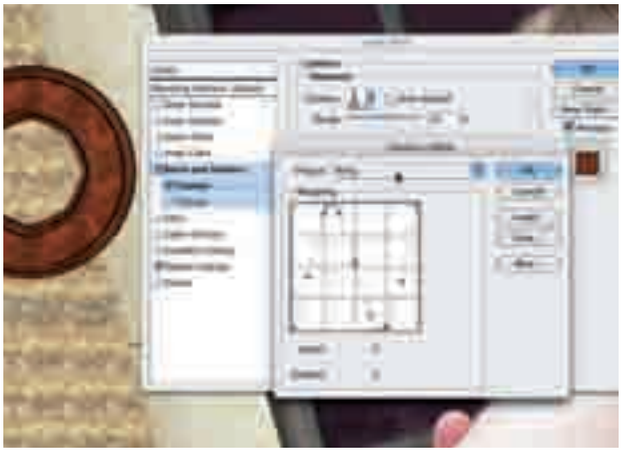
How to produce ties and mounts to keep your photos in place

16 Scale and rotate Drag the torn photo's layer thumbnail from the Layers palette to the main scrapbook document. It will appear as a new layer. Edit>Free Transform the photo to rotate and scale it. Right-click the photo's thumbnail and hit Select Layer Transparency. The 'marching ants' selection marquee will appear.

17 Create a shadow Create a layer called 'Shadow'; Edit>Fill the marquee selection with black. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Use a value of 7 pixels to give the shadow a soft edge. Put the Shadow layer below the Happy Couple photo layer. Position the shadow layer as shown (Move tool) to make the photo stand out.

18 Binding ring Create a layer called 'Tie'. To make an attractive photo mount draw a circle with the Elliptical Marquee tool (M). Go to Edit>Stroke and stroke the marquee with a Width of 70 pixels. Tick the Inside button. Hit OK. Click the Layers palette's Add a Layer Style icon – hit Pattern Overlay. Pick the Rusted Metal pattern.

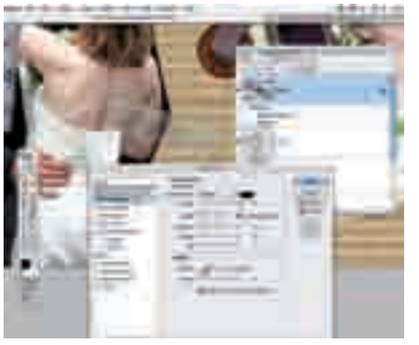
19 Bevel it Click on the words Bevel and Emboss. Set Style to Inner Bevel. Set Technique to Chisel Hard. Increase Size to 13 pixels to add a bevelled edge to the ring. In the Shading section set the light's Angle to -162° and its Altitude to 58°. Click on Contour. From the Contour picker choose Ring. Now click OK.



20 Ties that bind Duplicate the ring by dragging its thumbnail to the Create a New Layer icon. Position the rings by the corner. Open Shoelace from the CD. Use the Edit>Free Transform command to rotate and scale the shoelace so that it joins the two rings together. Add a shadow to the shoelace using the techniques demonstrated in steps 16 and 17.

21 Group the components Use the advice in our Group It tip to group and duplicate the ring tie. Place the duplicated tie on the other side of the torn edge photo. Edit>Transform>Rotate it a little. Now create a new group that contains the photo and the ring ties. This will enable you to scale and move the photo and its ties with ease.

22 Cut out and keep Open Kiss.jpg. Use the Polygonal Lasso (L) to quickly draw a series of straight lines around the kissing couple. Edit>Copy the selection and Edit>Paste it into the main project. The couple look like they've been cut out with scissors, which helps give your digital scrapbook a pre-digital Seventies vibe. Place the Kiss layer below the Lace layer.



23 Stick up Create a new layer and use the Polygonal Lasso (L) to draw the outline of a bit of sticky tape. Go to Filter> Render>Clouds to add some texture. Click on Add a Layer Style. Tick the Drop Shadow attribute. Now tick the Satin attribute to add a shine. Click OK and set the layer's blending mode to Screen.

BITS AND BOBS

Produce digital embellishments for your scrapbook

24 **You've been framed** Add the image Confetti.jpg to the project. Label the layer 'Confetti'. Select the Custom Shape tool (Shift+U). Go to the Options bar and click the Custom Shape picker. Now Pick Frames from the list, select an ivory colour for the foreground and draw a shape using Frame 4.

25 **2D to 3D** Click the Add a Layer Style icon and tick Texture. Hit Satin in the Pattern picker – scale the Texture up to 500%. To give the frame depth, tick Inner Shadow. Hit OK. Target the Confetti layer, select an elliptical shape in the frame, go to Select>Inverse, then Edit>Cut to remove unwanted pixels outside the frame.

26 **New shape** Shift-click on the Confetti layer and its frame shape layer and choose Layer>New>Group From Layers. This enables you to scale, rotate and move the frame and its contents. Now select the Custom Shape tool again. Go to the Shape picker and load in the Shapes set. Select Blob 1.

27 **Hide layers** Create a blank layer with black as the foreground colour. Draw a Blob 1 shape – it'll have the satin-based layer style texture you created in step 25. In the Style picker hit Default Style (None). Target the Blob shape's layer thumbnail. Go to Layer>Rasterize>Layer. The vector shape becomes an editable bitmap.

28 **Define brush tip** Temporarily hide all the other layers in the Layers palette by clicking on their Eye icon. Draw a rectangular marquee around the black Blob, then go to Edit>Define Brush Preset. You've now created a confetti-shaped brush tip. Give it a name using the Brush Name dialog window. Click OK.

29 **Test the brush** Next, select the Brush tool (B). Scroll down to the bottom of the Brush Preset picker and select the new confetti-shaped brush tip. Delete the Blob shape layer because you no longer need it. Create a new blank layer to test your new brush. At this stage the confetti-shaped tips are all bunched up together.

30 **Edit brush attributes** Set the Toolbox's Foreground and Background colours to a confetti-style pastel pink and blue. Click on the Brushes palette icon (or tab). Click on Brush Tip Shape and set Spacing to 144%. Click Shape Dynamics and set Size Jitter to 65% and Angle Jitter to 29%. Set Control to Off. Tick Color Dynamics and test the edited brush tip.

31 **Let us spray** Make all layers visible again. Spray your confetti onto its own layer. Add a Bevel and Emboss layer style to make the confetti stand out. Tick Texture and choose a Molecular pattern to make the confetti look more realistic. Repeat steps 27 to 30 using a different custom shape to add variety to your CGI confetti.

Scanning real objects

Generate textures/source material

Some designers like to generate artwork and textures from scratch using Photoshop's tools and filters. You could generate a cloth texture background for your scrapbook using a pattern in the Pattern Overlay layer style's Pattern picker, but by scanning in a piece of real carpet and defining it as a pattern you can create your own unique textures. Scanning real objects also gives natural looking details that would be hard to fake in Photoshop, such as the torn paper we used in steps 9-11 to create a realistic border. Digitally created components can look too clean and pristine. There's no substitute for the rough and ready look you get using scanned objects.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Create new mounts, then create crinkly edges at a stroke

32 Polaroid Now open/add Polaroid.jpg. The frame was created by filling a rectangular marquee white. We scanned in some writing and overlaid it onto the Polaroid. A Darken layer blending mode removed the scanned paper background, leaving the handwriting visible.

33 Corner mounts To add corner mounts, create a layer and use the Polygonal Lasso to draw a triangle. Edit>Fill with red. Add a Pattern Overlay layer style. A Wrinkles pattern scaled to 7% will give texture. Create extra depth with Bevel and Emboss and Drop Shadow.

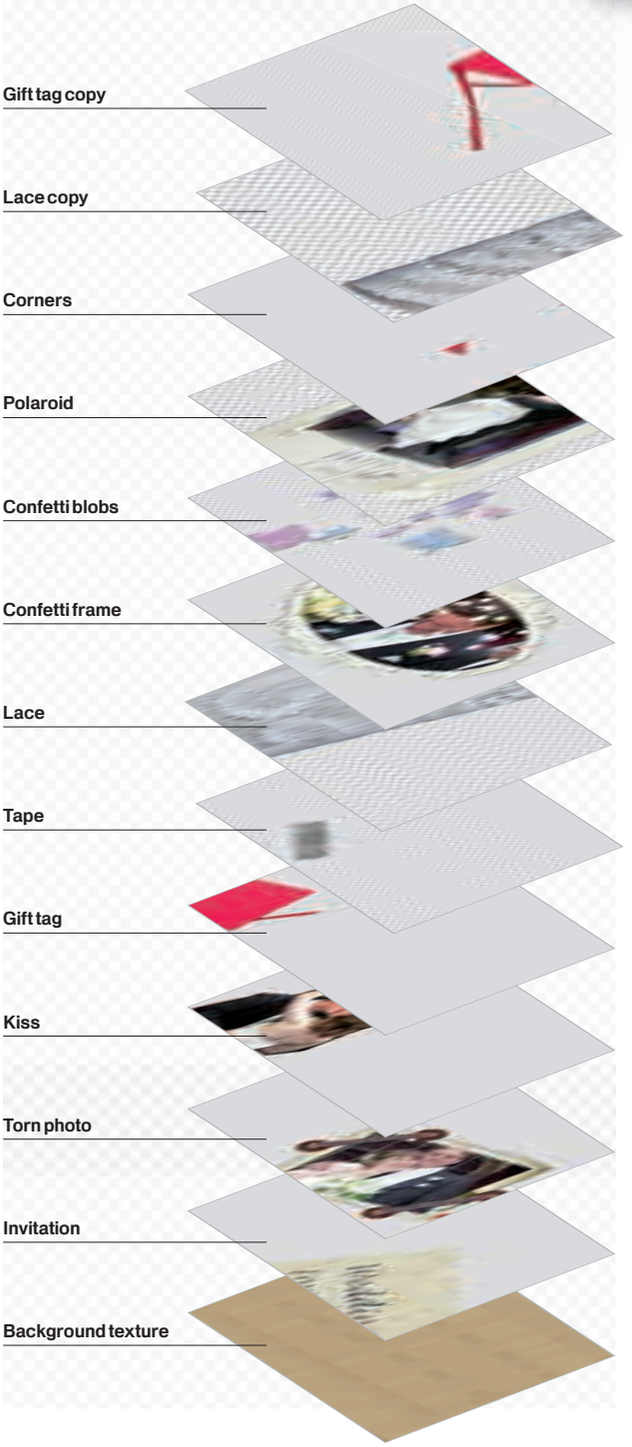
34 Wedding invitation Use the Rectangular Marquee to draw a wedding invitation card, and set the foreground and background to warm cream and ivory colours. Choose Filter>Render>Clouds to fill the marquee with a mottled texture. Select the Eraser tool (E). Click on the Brushes palette icon. Now click Brush Tip shape. Choose the Hard Round 19 tip and set Spacing to 90%.

35 Crinkly edges Go to the Paths palette menu: pick Make Work Path. Hit OK, turning the 'marching ants' marquee around the invitation into a solid path. Pick Stroke Path. Stroke the Eraser round the path to create crinkly edges – a large diameter gives a dramatic effect.

36 Finally... We've scanned some extra components and popped them on the CD so you can enhance your scrapbook. Use the Gift Tags (Tag.jpg) to add vivid complementary reds. Place the scanned flower from Rose.psd under the shoelace strap for a romantic flourish!

The layer structure

Organising the wedding



eMag

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
10 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Rosie Tanner

Akvis Sketch plug-in

Create your own masterpiece – no artistic talent required

If you've always fancied yourself as a bit of an artist but have the sketching skills of a monkey, then maybe it's time to turn to a plug-in for a little help.

Pencil sketches may look like they've been whisked up in a matter of minutes, but as anybody who has tried their hand at the real thing will know, it's really not that easy. In fact, producing any type of artistic effect is an acquired skill, whether it's painting in watercolour, sketching in pencil or drawing in graphite.

Here's where Akvis Sketch steps in to save the day. Designed to convert photos or images into various sketch themes, this plug-in makes an artistic whiz of you in an instant. This is actually the third version of the plug-in since its initial creation and it now features a 'Save Settings' function – great for when you produce a piece of work you're really pleased with. Now you can preserve all those perfect settings and apply them to any future masterpieces you choose to embark upon.

The plug-in is so easy to get to grips with, especially thanks to its quick load-up time. Once loaded, all the hard work is done for you, leaving you just to tweak the parameter fields in the Strokes and Effects categories.

The watercolour effect enables you to create a wet or dry effect, depending on your preference. Just a simple nudge of the slider will let you swap between the two. For a more contrasty edge, the Charcoal effect is a good option to go for, providing a natural raw look.

The plug-in offers precise control over the mid-tones in an image, including the degree of hatching you want to produce, as well as the overall intensity of the mid-tone strokes. There is also a Sharpen option. Choosing a low parameter means your image's edges will be softer, using hatching to define them. If you wanted a sharper edge, then all you'd need to do is set the parameter to High to get a sharp line-drawn edge to you image.

You can pick up the home edition of this great little plug-in online for $72 (£37). Just log onto **www.akvis.com** and complete the download instructions on-screen. There's even a try-before-you-buy option with a free ten-day trial.

FEELING SKETCHY

Creating impressive pencil sketches is no problem for Akvis Sketch

01 Open up Download the Akvis Sketch plug-in from the site and open up a picture you want in Photoshop. Images that look good converted into a sketch have a wide range in contrast. You'll find plenty of suitable images on the disc. Go to the menu bar and select Filter, then scroll down until you come to Akvis Sketch.

02 Press Play Press the Play button at the top right-hand corner of the Akvis Sketch interface and your image will begin to transform into a pencil sketch before your very eyes. The image you'll see initially is based on the default settings of this particular plug-in. Once the conversion is complete you have the option to tweak these settings yourself.

03 Compare and contrast Above the image is a Before and After tab. You can compare results by switching between them. For a closer look, use the Magnification slider at the top of the Navigator column and zoom in. The Navigator column is your control for everything from colouration to mid-tone intensity.

04 Picture power To flex your creative muscles, experiment with the Sketch effects. Here we've turned our sketch into a watercolour by using the top slider in the Effects box. The Settings column is made up of two sections: Effects and Strokes. Effects lets you try various artistic methods; Strokes lets you change the intensity of mid-tones and type of stroke used.

05 Charcoal cheats You can also use this plug-in to create a great charcoal effect. Simply drag the Charcoal slider to the maximum level and push the Coloration slider to zero. For a deeper impact we increased the mid-tones hatching, giving the image more punch. You won't see the results of your changes straight away. Press Play to perform each conversion.

06 Splash of colour Adding colour to your sketch simply means sliding the parameter to the right. This is the only parameter where you'll be able to see instant changes without pressing the green Play button. Moving the slider to the right means the converted drawing will extract colours from the original image. You cannot add colours that were not originally present.

07 Control The Angle parameter lets you set the pitch of the Sketch stroke. Usually it's set at 45 degrees, but can vary from 0-180. A small stroke size will give a harder feel; a large size will blur the edges, giving a softer look.

Tip

Save it

Save your preferred settings as a preset so you can use them to convert future images. In order to do this, enter a chosen preset name into the Presets field and press Save. Each time you open the program, your saved preset settings will be used rather than the default. Press Reset to revert to the default settings.

Save on Akvis Sketch

Akvis has generously offered a 20% discount on the Sketch plug-in to all *Photoshop Creative* readers. To get your discount, enter the code 'photosketch' into the coupon Code field. You can also follow the direct link: **www.plimus.com/jsp/buynow.jsp?contractId=1667477&couponCode=photosketch** and then press 'Recalculate' in order to see the discounted price.

Advice

Visit the advice centre for help with fixing photos, solutions to your image-editing problems and directions to helpful destinations on the web

Your expert panel…

GEORGE CAIRNS
A Photoshop user for many years, George can tackle any problem

ROSIE TANNER
Looking for some helpful web resources? Rosie can guide you to them

JO COLE
Jo's a big fan of saving as much time as possible, and is your guide to shortcuts

What you'll find in this section

Q+A
Get to the bottom of your image-editing woes in this part

PHOTOFIX
Send us your problem shots for advice on making them all better

RESOURCES
We guide you to the best websites for tutorials and instruction in using the Photoshop software

Send your questions to…

Post you questions to *Photoshop Creative* Q&A, Imagine Publishing Ltd, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EZ.

Alternatively you can email us at **PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk**.

Q+A

Let us sort out your image-editing quandaries

Perfect skin

Q I'm a subscriber and love your mag, and was wondering if you have a back issue covering skin tones or if you know a good plug-in for this.
Lisa Mansy

A Doctors can spot a poorly patient by the colour of their skin. They may appear pale, with the colour drained from their face, or their skin might be bright red or even have a jaundiced yellow hue. Capturing a healthy skin tone on camera isn't easy, and we can inadvertently make our subjects look ill. An incorrect white balance setting can cast a blue or orange tint on your subject's skin, making them look off-colour. A burst of flash can bleach out your healthy subject's skin colour.

Instead of suggesting a plug-in, we'll point you in the direction of Photoshop Elements 5 (it costs less than some plug-ins!), which has a tool to help you improve skin tones. Open a problem source file (like our blue colour cast example) in Elements 5 and go to Enhance> Adjust Color>Adjust Color For Skin Tone. This opens a dialog. When you move the cursor over the source image it changes to an Eyedropper tool. Click on an area of skin. If the shot is too cool or pale, Elements will warm it up and boost the saturation, creating a more natural looking skin tone.

You can fine-tune the initial adjustment using two sliders. The Tan slider increases or decreases the amount of brown in the subject's skin – this slider is designed for subtle tweaks. The Blush slider adjusts the red pixels in the subject's skin, enabling you to put some colour in their cheeks. If your subject's skin still looks too cold or warm, you can tweak the colour temperature of the skin using the Temperature slider in the Ambient Light section. This will warm up or cool down the skin tone. Our example image was fixed instantly, making this tool a one-click wonder.

The Adjust Color for Skin Tone command isn't perfect. As it adjusts the colour of the image as a whole, it can warm up or cool down background colours, so you may need to isolate the problem area before using the tool.

Although CS2 doesn't have a dedicated skin tone-fixing tool, you can still colour correct problem pictures to create healthier looking skin. When faced with the type of cold looking

Use Elements' advanced colour correction tools to create healthier looking skin tones in a click!

Tip

RAM

Open a typical document and work on it for a while. Apply a few filters to give Photoshop a mini workout. At the bottom of the document window is the Status Bar, displaying the document's size. Click the little arrow icon and hit Show>Efficiency. If you see 100% then Photoshop is working at peak efficiency and all your edits are being handled in the PC's RAM. If the value is less than 100%, Photoshop is sometimes being forced to use hard drive space to make up for the lack of RAM. This slows down its performance.

Straight lines

Draw a straight line every time

If you use the Gradient tool in order to create effects such as the graduated filter in your projects, it can be very useful to be able to draw a perfectly straight line from top to bottom.

This prevents the graduated filter effect from going wonky and tinting one corner without touching the other. As you draw downwards, hold the Shift key to constrain the cursor. It will now only move vertically. You can use this technique in order to constrain the cursor so that it draws perfect diagonal and horizontal lines as well.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS Tool shortcuts

	PC	Mac
Brush tool	B	B
Pencil tool	B	B
Magic Eraser tool	E	E
Blur tool	R	R

blue-tinted skin in our example image, go to Image>Adjustments>Photo Filter. Set the filter's pull-down menu to Warming Filter (85) and the skin will immediately take on a healthier looking tone. You can warm it up still further by increasing the value of the Density slider. You can also try targeting and altering specific skin tones by going to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Here you can use the pull-down menu to select reds or blues and adjust their Saturation value without changing other colours in the image.

For a final word on skin tones, it's worth taking a look at the Camera RAW editor in CS3. By using the master Saturation slider to boost a photo's colours you can end up over-saturating skin tones (creating bright red faces, for example). By using the new Vibrance slider you can boost an image's colours without over-saturating skin tones. The beauty of CS3's RAW editor is that it will edit JPEGs too, so all your shots can benefit from this advanced digital skin care treatment.

Cross processing

Q I'm a keen stock photographer, and notice that a lot of other photographers on the site have photographs that feature really unusual colours. The blues tend to look green, while the shadows have a bluish tinge. How can I get my own shots to have this stylised look? (Because it seems to sell well!)
Paul Hattersley

A It sounds like you're describing photos that mimic the 'old-school' cross-processing technique.

Cross processing is a traditional dark room technique in which slide films are developed in chemicals designed for prints (and vice versa). This process creates distinctive shots that feature the sort of attractive and unusual colours you've described. Cross-processed shots were in vogue in the Eighties and Nineties, especially for fashion photography. Darkroom cross processing was a messy hit-and-miss affair involving mucking around with smelly chemicals. You can use Photoshop's tools and commands to mimic the cross-processing effect digitally, and tinker with the effect until you're completely happy with it.

Kick off by choosing a suitable source image such as a fashion style portrait. Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon at

Tinker with your image's RGB channels to quickly create stylish cross-processing effects

Delete layers quickly

Trashcan tip

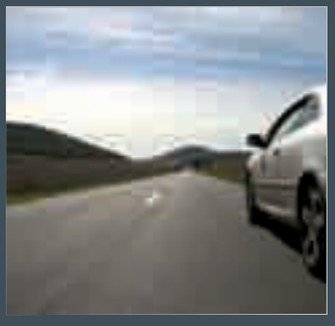
When you delete a layer you most probably drag its thumbnail to the trashcan icon which is at the bottom of the Layers palette. However, this can take up valuable time, especially if you have a large stack of layers that you want to delete. A faster way to delete an active layer is simply to click on the trashcan icon. Hold down the Alt key when you do this in order to prevent a warning dialog window from popping up. If you keep clicking the trashcan icon it will continue to delete each layer in the stack, one by one.

GRADUATED TINT

Fake a graduated sky filter

Q **In the Eighties, film directors enhanced their scenes by adding a tint to the top of the screen. This tint blended into the shot's normal colours. This kind of effect is also added to shots of cars in *Top Gear*. How can I add this stylish effect to a photo using Photoshop?**
Andrew Leitch

A The graduated tint effect is achieved by placing a filter over the camera lens. This darkens (or tints) the colours at the top of the image, turning a bland sky into a dramatic one. Here's how to do it using the Gradient tool.



01 **New layer** Here's a stylishly framed *Top Gear*-style shot. However, the sky is a bit bland and will benefit from the graduated filter treatment. Click on the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette., then press G to grab the Gradient tool from the Toolbox.

02 **Edit gradient** Hit D to set the foreground colour to black. Click the Gradient Editor icon in the Options bar. The default is Foreground to Background – click Foreground to Transparent. You could change the colour to tint the sky, but black lets us darken existing colours.

03 **Blend it** Click OK to choose the gradient. Click on the Linear Gradient icon in the Options bar. On the new layer, click and drag the cursor downwards from the top of the screen to add a gradient. Set the layer's blending mode to Overlay to darken the blue sky at the top of the image.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS Tool shortcuts

	PC	Mac
Eliptical Marquee tool	M	M
Lasso tool	L	L
Magnetic Lasso tool	L	L
Crop tool	C	C

RESPRAY

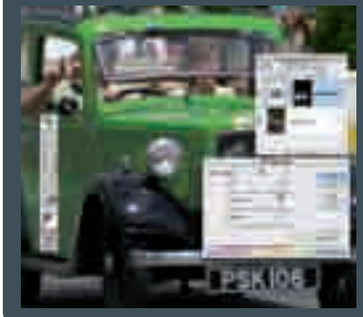
Change an object's colours digitally

Q I want to give my car a makeover by respraying it. Before I commit myself to a new colour scheme I'd like to digitally recolour it in Photoshop. I've tried selecting the car using the Magic Wand, but this creates a patchy selection to different shades. Any tips on changing the colour of the entire chassis?
Mark McMahon

A The Magic Wand is not the ideal tool here. A more sophisticated way to isolate the different shades of colour on the car is to use the Color Range command…

01 Sample colours Go to Select> Color Range. If there is a strong contrast between light and shade, reduce the Fuzziness slider to, say, 21. Use the middle Add to Sample Eyedropper tool to sample versions of the target colour. The chassis should be pure white in the Preview window.

02 Adjustment layer Click OK to select the sampled colours. Press Cmd/Ctrl+H to hide the 'marching ants'. Click the Layers palette's Adjustment Layer icon and hit Hue/Saturation. This creates an adjustment layer with a mask targeting the selection – it doesn't touch the rest of the image.



03 Respray Drag the Master Hue slider to another position and all shades of the sampled colour range will change. If areas like skin tones are selected, hit OK to apply the adjustment. You can then paint a black brush on the adjustment layer to stop specific areas changing colour.

the bottom of the Layers palette and choose Curves. Here you can tweak the red, green and blue colours that make up the image to create a distinctive cross-processed style shot.

Select the Red channel in the Curves dialog's pull-down menu. Click at the top right point of the curve and drag it left. The Input box should have a value of around 233, with the Output at 255. This brightens the Red channel's highlights and tweaks the hue of the image as a whole. Drag the bottom of the curve to the right to darken the reds lurking in the shadows (Input 35, Output 0). Go to the Green channel and experiment by creating an 'S' shaped curve to increase contrast in the highlights and darken the shadows (see our example).

To create the green sky tint common in post-processed images, select the Blue curve. Drag the top of the curve down a tad and push the bottom upwards. This removes blue from shadows and highlights, leaving a green hue.

We've included the RGB channel graphs in our example, but feel free to experiment and create your own effects. Our shot also has the traditional blown-out highlights and clipped shadows associated with cross-processed images. To preserve shadow and highlight detail but keep the cool colours, set the adjustment layer's blending mode to Overlay.

Video

Q I'm trying to take screenshots from my video footage to use as part of a DVD cover. My captured video still frames are ruined by horizontal lines, but they aren't visible in the moving footage. I know this might not be appropriate to Photoshop, but I'd appreciate any help you can give as I'm designing the DVD cover in Photoshop.
Maureen Green

A Video footage is made up of a series of still frames, so in theory it should be easy enough to grab a frame and import it into Photoshop. However, to create a smoother illusion of movement, each frame of video is made up of two separate fields. These fields are mixed (or interlaced) together. When you try and capture a still frame you often see two separate versions of the frame due to this interlacing effect, especially if you're viewing a scene with a lot of movement. Luckily, Photoshop is clever enough to remove one of these fields from a still frame so that you can avoid the nasty interlaced artefacts that you mention.

Open your frame of footage in Photoshop and go to Filter>Video>De-Interlace. You can choose to remove either the odd or even fields. It's worth experimenting to see which field gives you the best results. To remove a field (and lose the horrible horizontal interlaced lines) Photoshop has to make up some new pixels. You can tell it to do this by interpolating or duplicating existing pixels. When creating our example screenshot, both duplication methods produced equally good results and abolished the interlacing artefacts.

Hard and soft

Use shortcuts to soften up your brush tips

When you are using brush tips in order to create effects such as our gory droplets of blood, you can add more variety to a scene by altering the hardness or softness of your brush tip. A quick way to soften your brush tip's edge is simply to hold down Shift and then press the left square bracket key a few times. In order to harden up the tip's edge, hold down Shift and then press the right square bracket. This saves you the hassle of moving the cursor up to the Brush Preset picker to alter the softness/hardness with a slider.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS Tool shortcuts

	PC	Mac
Slice tool	K	K
Slice Select tool	K	K
Patch tool	J	J
Clone Stamp tool	S	S

Import video footage and get rid of nasty interlacing artefacts by using dedicated video filters

Font frustration

Q I'm experimenting with typography and am impressed with Photoshop's range of fonts. However, I find it very distracting that a line appears under my letters as I type. This makes it hard to concentrate on the design of the text, especially when viewing letters that fall below the line, eg 'Y's. Is there a way to get rid of this line? And is there a quick way to change fonts without having to scroll through options in the Font menu?
Rory Putner

A Type some text using the Horizontal Type tool. To get rid of the base line that appears, press Cmd+H on a Mac or Ctrl+H on a PC. This hides the distracting line.

To rapidly change an existing font, type out some text and make sure it's highlighted by dragging the cursor across the text. Double-click the cursor in the Options bar's Font field to highlight the current font. You can then use the up and down arrow keys to jump from font to font. Your highlighted text will change to display each new font. The Hide shortcut we mentioned above also enables you to see the font's true colour even when it's highlighted, allowing you to scroll through different fonts without the colour being obscured.

Give blood

Q I'm working on a poster for a horror film and want to embellish it with droplets of blood. Can you show me a suitable technique? Ideally the droplets should merge realistically into one another.
Sam Galer

A Thanks for the bloodthirsty question, Sam! Here's a fun, safe and quick way to spatter your workspace with droplets of blood. Click on the Toolbox's Foreground Color icon and choose a blood red colour. Grab the Brush tool (B) and select a hard-edged brush from the Brush Preset picker.

At this stage the brush won't be able to paint realistic droplets, so click on the Brushes palette icon to mix up a bucket of blood. Click Brush Tip Shape and drag the Spacing slider to 45%. This will help spread the brush tips out. For more randomly sized droplets click Shape Dynamics. Drag the Size Jitter slider up to 70%. To increase the range of your blood spray, click Scattering and drag the Scatter slider to 300%. Once you've filled your brush with blood, create a new layer and spray the droplets all over it! They'll be spread randomly around the screen.

To give each 2D droplet a three-dimensional look, click on the Add a Layer Style icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Choose Bevel and Emboss. In the Structure section of the Bevel and Emboss dialog window, set Style to Inner Bevel. Set Technique to Smooth. Set Depth to 111% and Direction to Up. As you increase the Size slider, the blood will begin to rise towards you, with a realistic liquid edge appearing around the droplets. To create a shiny looking liquid, go to the Shading section of the Bevel and Emboss layer style and place the Global light at an Angle of around 153˚. Set its Altitude to 79˚. This is like placing a light directly above the blood, creating realistic specular highlights. You're now equipped to paint the town red!

You don't need to open a vein to create striking blobs of blood. The Brush picker and layer styles will do the trick

Book resources

For a quick reference for all your Photoshop dilemmas, the 500 Photoshop Hints, Tips and Techniques book is a must. It's written by Mike Crawford, and published by RotoVision. Get your copy for £16.99 now.

Blood transfusion

Save your brush tips and share them with friends

In our final question this month we spent a while modifying a brush tip so that it would spatter the screen with random droplets of blood. Some landed as single blood spots, while others merged into a larger randomly shaped pool of liquid. If you close Photoshop you'll lose your carefully edited brush tip. To preserve the tip for future use go to the Tool Preset picker in the Options bar. Click on the picker's Menu icon and choose New Tool Preset. Now give the brush a catchy name. You can also preserve the blood red colour by clicking on the Include Color icon.

Save your style

Preserve your customised layer styles

On the left we showed you how to save your blood-spattering brush tip for future use. That technique only preserves the way the edited tip behaves. It doesn't contain the Bevel and Emboss settings that gives the blood a 3D appearance. To preserve them, go to the Layer Styles palette. Click the New Style button. In the New Style dialog window type in a suitable name. Tick the Include Layer Effects box and hit OK. You can access the new style from the Style picker and get it to fill any custom shape!

PHOTO FIX

Send in your troublesome images for us to fix…

Send your problematic photos on a CD to:

Photo Fix, *Photoshop Creative*, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EZ

Unfortunately we cannot return CDs

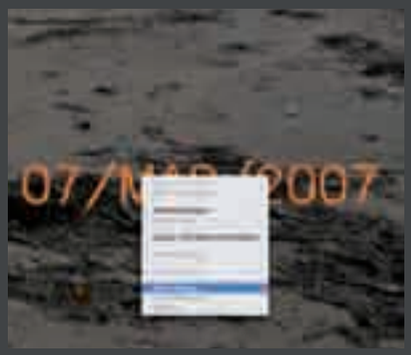
Blind date

Remove unsightly dates from your photographs using the power of Photoshop

Imprinting dates on images harks back to the days of 35mm film, when the numbers helped to keep images in order. Nowadays EXIF data stores all the date info. However, you may still come across images with the date on. Getting rid of it is simple, but there's more than one solution. Depending on the composition, you may get away with cropping with the Crop tool. The Clone Stamp is also useful but can be time-consuming – results can be good depending on the accuracy of your source-point selection. However, we recommend the Patch tool. It's quick, and results can be very good. You need a clean background around the date; if it's cluttered with colours, you may need to select each character and apply the Patch tool, so you can pick small areas of the image to patch from. Our image is quite plain at the bottom, so we'll eradicate the date in one go.

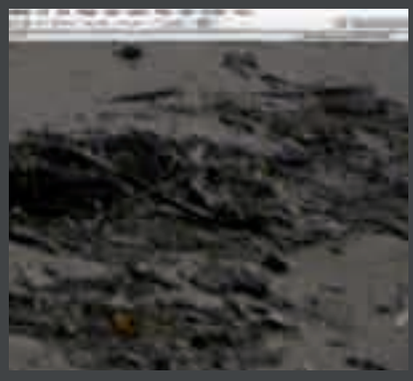
NOW YOU SEE IT...

Three quick steps to date-free images



01 Date selection Open the image and use the Zoom tool to get in close to the date. There are various selection methods you can use with the Patch tool, but for blocks of colour on a relatively plain background, as in our image, Color Range will work just fine. With the Patch tool selected, right-click/Ctrl-click and hit Color Range.

02 In range In the dialog, use the first eyedropper to sample a colour in the date. Make sure Selection (not Image) is chosen in the options. With the Fuzziness slider, increase the value until just the date is visible. If this isn't possible, you'll need to use another method to isolate it (see Tool School).



03 Patch it up Hit OK then make sure Source is selected in the Options bar and Transparent is unticked. Hover over the selection so the cursor changes from Lasso to the Move symbol. Drag to an area you'll use to patch over the date; it shows a preview. Let go the mouse, and the Patch tool works its magic.

Tool School

Making your selection

If the date's colour doesn't differ a lot from the background, you can use the Lasso in the Patch tool to select the area round it. But for more accuracy, make your selection before using the Patch tool, with Magic Wand or Magnetic Lasso.

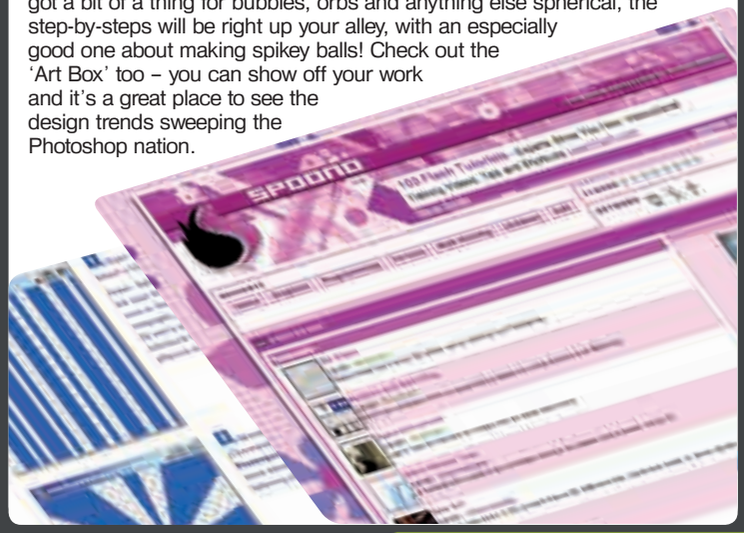
RESOURCES

Even more fantastic Photoshop goodies from the World Wide Web...

SPOONO

www.spoono.com

This bright and breezy site is a surefire pick-me-up for the glummest Photoshopper, not least because of the hot-pink home page! It's bursting with info about both Photoshop and web design, with tutorials on creating amazing graphics and typefaces. If, like us, you've got a bit of a thing for bubbles, orbs and anything else spherical, the step-by-steps will be right up your alley, with an especially good one about making spikey balls! Check out the 'Art Box' too – you can show off your work and it's a great place to see the design trends sweeping the Photoshop nation.



PHOTOSHOP TIPS – ARRAICH

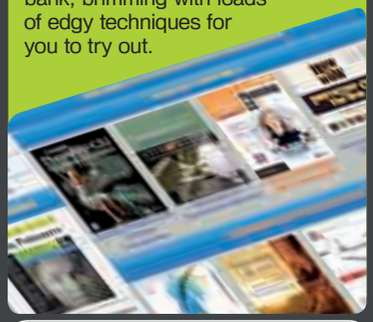
www.arraich.com

This is a fantastic learning tool for anyone new to the Photoshop game. Simplicity is key here, with the no-frills layout keeping your mind on the task in hand. There are heaps of tutorials to try out, covering the basics of both Photoshop and Elements. To help you on your way there's even a free step log you can download to help you remember what you learn.

PHOTOSHOP CAFE

www.photoshopcafe.com

If café culture is your thing, why not hop online and join the other patrons. This site is packed full of useful information including the latest reviews, buying advice and articles on subjects such as the latest design trends. There's a really inspiring gallery, plus a whole section dedicated to quick tips to give your projects a boost. There's also an extensive tutorial bank, brimming with loads of edgy techniques for you to try out.



TUTORIALIZED

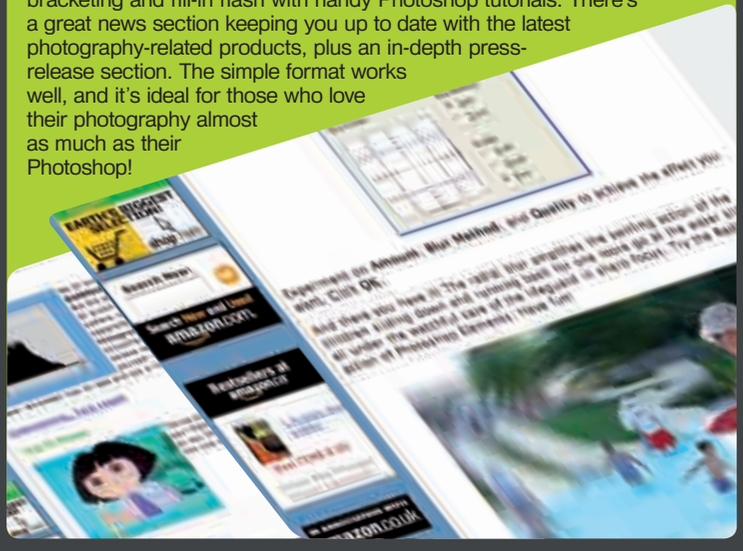
www.tutorialized.com

Any website which tells you how to create your very own monkey in Photoshop gets the thumbs-up from us. Tutorialized.com is a site stuffed full of fun tutorials to get stuck into, with subjects including spiders, shields and even Powerpuff girls! There are also chapters dedicated to desktop publishing, web design and animation, if you're feeling really adventurous. And you'll find a fantastic section on text effects, including writing in sand or even fire!

PHOTOXELS

www.photoxels.com

If you want to brush up your photography skills to improve your source imagery, this site explains the basics in an easy-to-follow way. Photoxels combines tutorials on techniques like exposure, bracketing and fill-in flash with handy Photoshop tutorials. There's a great news section keeping you up to date with the latest photography-related products, plus an in-depth press-release section. The simple format works well, and it's ideal for those who love their photography almost as much as their Photoshop!



PHOTOSHOP CONTEST

www.photoshopcontest.com

Judging by your Readers' Challenge entries we know you're up for a challenge. Well, this site is dedicated to Photoshop challenges, with plenty of themes to sink your creative teeth into. Prizes include iPods, Wacom graphics tablets and cameras. This is a great place to pick up ideas for future projects, and the site also throws in some excellent tutorials covering all aspects of Photoshop.

eMag

creative reviews

Check out the latest touch-sensitive camera technology, read up on Adobe's newest training disc and feast your eyes on the hottest new books

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"The latest touch-sensitive technology at your fingertips"

Samsung NV7

HARDWARE

Samsung NV7

A truly versatile camera sure to turn your friends green with NV…

It's been a long time between the launch of the Samsung NV range last summer and our chance to finally get our hands on the series' flagship model. But here at last is the Samsung NV7 – was it worth the wait?

On the whole, yes. This camera isn't without its flaws but it's the coolest and smartest compact we've seen emerge from the Samsung stable since our old favourite, the L85. Looks-wise, it's highly distinctive, with a black, brushed aluminium body and a retro shape that reminds us of old 35mm film cameras. The 7x optical zoom lens up front looks enormous on such a small body and, coupled with the camera's weight, makes it not very pocket-friendly. Nevertheless, it's eye-catching and intuitive to use.

The real difference between this camera and all others is found round the back in the form of Samsung's innovative control system. Where other manufacturers have recently opted for a touch screen menu system, Samsung has found a new approach of its own called Smart Touch. The LCD has a row of seven small square buttons located directly beneath it plus six small square buttons to its right, but none of them are labelled. These controls are a replacement for the familiar multi-functional d-pad, and are positioned to enable you to select and adjust icons around the edge of the screen.

So, for example, if you want to change your flash mode, you simply press the button below the on-screen flash icon. This brings up a sub-menu from which you can select your new setting using the column of buttons to the right of the screen. You can also brush your finger along each row of buttons to scan through images or reposition sliding markers. It's all very clever and, once you've got the hang of it, very easy too. However, we must emphasise the 'getting the hang of it' part,

info

COMPANY
Samsung

WEB
www.samsung.co.uk

PRICE (SRP)
£299

MEGAPIXELS
7.2

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK...

You don't have to sacrifice style for quality with this camera

Looking for the whole package? Check out the features the NV7 has to offer…

Finger fantastic
This camera lets your fingers do the talking with its unique Smart Touch technology. Choosing menu options actually becomes very efficient.

Manual labour
On lazy days, benefit from Automatic mode to simply point and shoot, then switch to the Manual setting when you want to get creative.

Get the connection
Both USB and AV cables come supplied in the box. You can use the USB lead to recharge the camera directly from the mains.

because this system is so unlike any other camera that it really does take time to adjust to its logic.

Because the controls are unique, it's easy to overlook the camera's other features. In fact, the NV7 is an extremely well-stocked compact, offering not only the usual program and scene modes, but also aperture, shutter and full manual control. There's a Movie mode as well, of course (MPEG-4 VGA, 30fps), plus an Effects mode that offers a wide range of fun templates for your shots. Just for a change, some of these effects are worth trying out (our particular favourite is the 'MGM-style' surround,) and the ability to shoot split-frame images can also lead to some creative results.

In Playback mode, you'll find a photo gallery that stores your images according to date, and even a movie-editing function that enables you to trim your filmmaking efforts during playback. Using these advanced functions, there are few who won't have to spend time referring to the operating manual, because the on-screen icons don't tell you enough to make it an intuitive process to follow through.

With all these gizmos and gadgets, it would be easy to dismiss the NV7 as an expensive 'fun' camera. The good news for serious photographers is that the camera also delivers a nifty shooting performance. Reaction times are fast, with the autofocus working swiftly and accurately in most shooting situations – while in Manual mode, it proves considerably easier to adjust aperture and shutter settings than it can be on other manual compacts.

The adjustments are made using a sliding scale, which provides a very useful visual guide for what you're trying to achieve. Unfortunately, the same system doesn't work so well for manual focus, because brushing the row of buttons to slide the scale makes it hard to hold the camera steady. As a result, it's difficult to see if you've achieved correct focus.

In most scenarios, the NV7 delivers a cracking shot. The camera's strongest asset is its ability to capture well-saturated colour. Landscapes and floral shots come out a treat, capturing a high level of detail and texture as well as an accurate tonal range. However, at full zoom, the crispness of results begins to lessen, producing softer edges and a slight increase in noise.

Overall, Samsung has produced a winner in the NV7. It's not a camera for all tastes, and often feels like a high-class gadget rather than a true enthusiasts' camera. Nevertheless, it's got more features and better results than most new cameras at its price point, and it delivers them with no small amount of style.

SMART CHOICE

The NV7 offers a great combination of style and performance, pairing modern touch-sensitive technology with a traditional 35mm feel.

Full manual control This camera enables you to switch between Manual and Automatic mode. For real precision over exposure, the Manual setting is an extremely handy addition.

Smart Touch technology To access the menu options, run your fingers over the buttons, which line the LCD. This is a very neat concept, although it takes some time to get used to it – so you need to get practising.

"THE CAMERA'S STRONGEST ASSET IS ITS ABILITY TO CAPTURE WELL-SATURATED COLOUR. LANDSCAPES AND FLORAL SHOTS COME OUT A TREAT"

Wide angle
At 38mm, the wide angle capabilities are hardly mind-blowing, but even at its widest point the NV7 produces sharp, good quality images.

Maximum zoom
Images do fall on the soft side at full zoom, but to most people this is only noticeable when you magnify the image. Note the vibrancy of colours.

Memory
This camera uses SD cards, which are widely available at very reasonable prices. The memory card slides easily into its compartment.

PROS

- Full complement of automatic and manual settings
- Eye-catching design
- Great colour saturation

CONS

- The Smart Touch technology is a little tricky at first
- Not the most compact of cameras
- Images at full zoom appear a little soft

VERDICT

8.0

If you're after quality images crossed with a stylish bit of kit, this is a great model to consider

PRODUCTS

The popular podcast is condensed onto DVD-ROM

The Best of Adobe Photoshop TV: Season One

info

COMPANY
Photoshop TV

WEB
www.photoshoptv.com

PRICE
£35.99

OPERATING SYSTEMS
PC and Mac

Photoshop TV is a weekly podcast available from **www.photoshoptv.com**. It's a studio-based show that combines news and special guests with expert Photoshop tips and video tutorials. Featuring 'The Photoshop Guys' – Scott Kelby, Dave Cross and Matt Kloskowski – *Photoshop TV* is a must-watch for fans of the image-manipulation software.

Now up to episode 71 at the time of writing, this DVD-ROM collects the best tutorials of season one (episodes 1-20). That's just the tutorials – all the studio banter and news segments are cut out. The formula works well, and you can skip straight to the nitty gritty of learning what you can do with Photoshop.

It's simple to use. Just pop the disc into your computer's DVD-ROM drive and you should run automatically. However, we tried it on both a Mac and a Windows XP PC, and each time had to view the contents, manually locate the program file and run it from there. When you open the disc contents in this way you'll see the tutorial files listed individually, which you can click on and open. This does away with the DVD interface and just has the video tutorial.

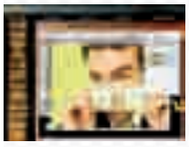
The disc launches with a quick intro from the three main presenters. Down the left are the contents, with four tutorial sections: Basics, Special FX, Photo FX and Assorted Wonders. Each contains a selection of tutorials, listed down the left. Click on any of the headers to launch the tutorial in the main window.

The tutorials are extremely easy to follow. No matter what level you're at in Photoshop, you're likely to learn something, although absolute beginners might be overwhelmed.

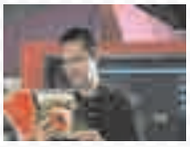
Our main niggle is that it seems expensive. The podcast is available weekly from the site or via iTunes, and missed episodes can be bought from the Photoshop TV shop for $1.99 each. When most of the show's contents have been cut down, £35 with just one extra (outtakes) seems a bit extortionate. More extras, especially from the special guests who are on the show each week, would have added extra value. As it is, there are cheaper tutorial-based programs out there that also offer a high quality of tuition.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

A taster of what's in store…

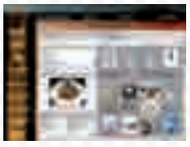


Assorted Wonders A mish-mash of tutorials that don't fit into the other three sections. There are some real treats here.



Outtakes As a bit of light relief, there's a short section with outtakes from the recordings of *Photoshop TV*.

Creative effects Some great tutorials on adding image effects. The video clips are all commentated by one of the presenters.



Basics Looks at simple tools and how to get the most out of them. Not a beginners' guide, but useful if you're new.

DVD-ROM This disc only plays on a computer with a DVD-ROM drive. There are two program files to run the disc – one for a Mac (.osx) and one for a PC (.exe) – so if it doesn't autorun, click the right file for your system to get started.

Simple sections There are four key sections on the disc: The Basics, Special FX, Photo FX and Assorted Wonders. They are pretty self-explanatory and there are over two hours' worth of tutorials on offer.

Content The content of the disc is limited to the tutorials featured in the original podcasts. None of the studio-based comment, news, competitions or banter is present, though you do get a blooper reel as an added extra.

Main window Here is the main window, currently showing the introduction to the disc. The video tutorials appear here when they are in progress, and a bar runs along the bottom which enables you to pause, rewind or forward clips.

PROS

- Loads of expert advice
- Easy-to-follow tutorials
- Gets straight to the point

CONS

- Highly priced and not enough extras
- You need a DVD-ROM drive

VERDICT

7.0

Nice collection of useful tutorials, which are easy to understand. Does seem a tad expensive

eMag

BOOKS

Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0 A-Z

Make sure you grab yourself a copy of this perfect software companion

Most software releases seem to be upgrades to previous versions. Photoshop Elements is no exception, and now in its fifth edition there are more features and functions to learn about than ever before. It's for this reason that investing in a reference book is a good idea. No matter how intuitive a program may be, there are always times when you need a helping hand.

This book is the ideal companion for anyone new to the program, or who simply needs a quick point of reference when completing tasks and projects.

The A-Z format is very helpful and enables you to find an answer to almost any question in a flash. There are handy edge tabs to help you locate your required letter with ease. A lot of thought has gone into the usability of the book, and it really pays off. The pages include before-and-after diagrams, flag up new features in the software and even provide links to the book's website for more in-depth tutorials.

We found the step-by-steps at the front particularly helpful, covering 27 of the most common tasks you'd want to know about. Overall this is a perfect aid to anyone who wants to improve their knowledge of Elements 5.0 with minimum fuss and effort.

info

AUTHOR
Philip Andrews

PRICE
£17.99

PUBLISHER
Focal Press

ISBN
978-0-240-52061-2

Step by step The book kicks off with some really handy walkthroughs which are quick and easy to follow

Alphabetically ordered The A-Z format makes navigation a breeze, enabling you to whiz through to where you need to be – a super-efficient process.

GET AHEAD IN ELEMENTS

The A-Z to get you up to speed

Toolbar tips The toolbar illustrations make following the tips and advice very easy, and aid your navigation around the software

Photo-editing skills The book aims to give you an overview of the whole program, including detailed advice on photo-editing techniques.

Before and after These handy before-and-after boxes show you what to expect when you try things out for yourself the first time.

Pick your preferences There's a handy section dedicated to software preferences, which lets you set up your workspace exactly as you wish.

Creative techniques As well as photo-related advice, you'll find plenty of creative tips and techniques throughout the book.

NOTES | LET US KNOW IF THERE'S A TYPE OF PHOTOSHOP BOOK YOU'D LIKE US TO REVIEW – JUST EMAIL PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

Create and Print Calendars and Greetings Cards Using Your Digital Photos

There's no excuse to miss another birthday...

It's really satisfying to put your photos to good use, and creating greetings cards and calendars are two great ways of doing this. The aim of this book is to teach you the most effective ways to create impressive effects for almost every occasion. It comes with a CD-ROM full of card and calendar templates, compatible with Photoshop and Corel Paint Shop Pro. Just like the book, it's very straightforward to use and requires minimal effort to load.

The title of this book sounds very specific, but in fact it's a great resource whether you want to make greetings cards or not. There are some great photo-editing tips such as adjusting tone and colour and applying filters, which can be used on their own or in conjunction with card or calendar creations.

This book is only going to interest those fairly new to the world of Photoshop, because the format is quite basic – but it's a fun little book with a really practical use.

info

AUTHORS
Graham Davis and Adam Juniper

PRICE
£14.99

PUBLISHER
ILEX

ISBN
978-1-904705-98-7

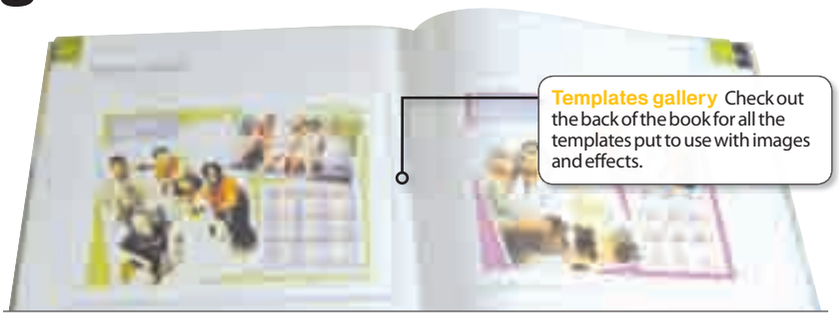


IMAGE-EDITING TECHNIQUES

Boost your photo-editing skills

Sepia toning You'll find a great nine-step tutorial for transforming your images by creating perfect sepia tones.

Create soft focus Learn the beauty-industry secret of adding a soft-focus look – ideal for concealing wrinkles!

Using filters Try out various filters available within Photoshop. Each one brings a different mood to the scene.

Creating a composite Even creating a composite is broken down into easy steps, making it manageable.

Advanced Digital Photography

Advanced techniques but a friendly style with simple instructions

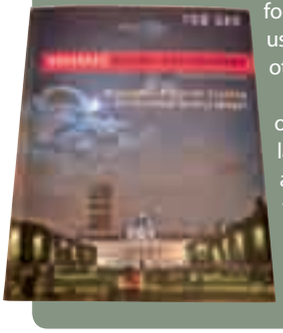
info

AUTHOR
Tom Ang

PRICE
£16.99

PUBLISHER
Mitchell Beazley

ISBN
978-1-84533-256-3



Don't be scared off by the word 'Advanced' in this book's title – it refers to the level of technique you can achieve, rather than the level of instruction. In fact, the book is very user-friendly and easy to follow.

It's divided into two main sections: Digital Imaging Principles and Mastering Image Manipulation. Luckily for Photoshop users the Image Manipulation section is vast, offering great tips to give your images a professional finish. Interspersed within this section are five workshops, each focusing on a specific technique. These are particularly useful learning tools, as they manage to break down otherwise challenging techniques into manageable steps.

What really stands out is the book's vibrancy. Too often photography books provide second-rate images, lacking in inspiration, but this one is bursting with colour and interest from cover to cover. It's a great resource to have handy on your bookshelf, and even provides a comprehensive list of further reading and helpful sites so you can extend your knowledge.

If image editing is your thing, this book is a must.

Art of the Digital Age

Get inspired by an artistic round-up of the modern age

If anything is going to give your creative juices a kick-start, this book is sure to do it.

Art of the Digital Age highlights the latest techniques at the forefront of modern art, packed full of weird and wonderful examples of where art stands today.

Although there are no tutorials or hands-on resources present in the book, it still acts as a valuable tool in terms of ideas and inspiration. Covering digital art from all corners, the book dedicates chapters to digital imaging, sculpture, installation and virtual reality to name a few. There's even a section about the rise of 'Game Art' and 'Net Art', which makes for some very interesting reading.

If your interest in Photoshop extends to the wider world of art then this will definitely be a worthwhile purchase. Not only does it look good enough to sit proudly on a coffee table, but it's packed full of ideas and information which could inspire you in future projects.

info

AUTHOR
Bruce Wands

PRICE
£19.95

PUBLISHER
Thames & Hudson

ISBN
978-0-500-28629-6

Exhibit

Here's the part where you show us what you can do. Check out whether your work graces this issue's pages…

Never a day goes by in the *Photoshop Creative* office when we're not amazed by the standard of entries for Readers' Challenge. You know when something is art when it provokes a reaction – and time after time your Readers' Challenge entries continue do this. Every morning the postbag arrives with yet more excellent creations that make us smile, laugh or sometimes even gasp!

This issue we've got a varied roundup of entries, all of which have caught our eye for their originality and inspired use of the source images. Congratulations to Rita Granda, who takes the prize this issue for her wonderful zebra creation on the right.

Nicci Arosen also deserves a mention for her gorgeous use of reflections, while Amanda Riley's great use of patterns also ticked the boxes for us.

Check out Don Trueman's summer-inspired entry, and Brian Elliot's kaleidoscope creation, which had our heads spinning for ages. Matt Gross has given us a great offering from the source images supplied back in issue 14, which just goes to show you'll never miss out with this competition because there's no closing date.

So if you have a challenge that you've been working on, be sure to send it in no matter what issue it's from.

We're looking forward to your next batch of entries already, so get creative!

Get your work featured

If you'd like to share your work with others, send your pictures in to us and you could be featured on these pages. Just pop your images onto a CD and send it to:

Exhibit, *Photoshop Creative*, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EZ, UK

Alas, we can't return any CDs.
If your entry is under 2MB, you can email it to **PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk**

THE WINNER!

Rita Granda

In the shadows

"I liked the big red building image so much, especially the silhouette. I extracted the zebra, duplicated that twice and merged them together. I inverted the zebra image and then blended that onto the building silhouette. I took the branch image and used the shadow/highlights adjustment several times to make it more like a drawing, and then colourised it with a Hue/Saturation adjustment. I then blended the building and zebras onto the branch image. I used several foliage brushes from issue 17."

Why it's a winner!

We love the degree of thought that Rita has put into this image. Rather than throwing all the source images together, she has carefully selected a few photographs based on their strong lines and silhouettes. The composition works perfectly and Rita has managed to create a very convincing sense of perspective in this piece. A brilliantly executed piece of work – well done Rita!

Amanda Riley

Zebra crossing

"In this image I used the zebra photo with one that I had, and made a zebra crossing theme. Gradients and custom shapes were used for the background."

Jamie Brant

(bottom left)

Moonlight

"I went a bit mad on this image and lost myself a little. I started off by mirroring the image. I used Smudge stick and then Film Grain. I messed around with levels and curves to achieve the surreal look. Most of the techniques I used were from this magazine. I've just discovered the magazine and I've had a lot of fun reading it."

Barry Cleugh

(bottom right)

The devil is in the detail

This creepy challenge entry is very striking – who'd have thought a dodo could look so threatening!

Exhibit

Turn to page 98 and enter this issue's Readers' Challenge

Robert Souther

After the flood

This creation caught our eye for the pure quirkiness of the scene. It makes us smile every time we take a look at it!

Matt Gross

Jumbo

"Multiple layers help bring the rarely seen 'Jumbo the turtle' to reality. I combined him and his shadow onto one layer, then used the Airbrush eraser to bring some blades of grass beneath into the foreground – nestling him in the thick grass. A couple of tweaks of the levels and the Hue and Saturation gives it a more surreal, dreamlike effect."

Brian Elliot

Kaleidoscope

Brian reached new heights with this mind-bending piece. He says, "It was difficult this month as the images were pretty nondescript! Still, using many of the mag's tutorials I did my best!"

Tracy Morgan (left)

Love poem

We love this romantic image Tracy has produced, using subtle hints of colour to tie everything together.

Nicci Arosen

Pier to heaven

What a great use of symmetry and reflection. This eerie image draws you in with mesmerising effect.

Helen Burch

Glow-time

"I used the zebra image – rendered it, then duplicated and flipped it, with the blend mode set to Hard Light. The background is the cherry image from CD18, and the image for the moon in the top left corner is also from CD18."

Don Trueman

Summer siren

I've been an avid reader since I discovered your mag some time ago. I've been a Photoshop junkie for three and a half years – doing some design work, but mostly altering images, leaning to the 'artistic' side."

George Chaloupka

Artistic noise

"I manipulated this picture in Photoshop CS2 using duplication, desaturation and posterization on a 'noise' background."

WIN! ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 5.0

Enter our challenge and see your work in the magazine!

Readers' Challenge

Get those creative juices flowing with this latest batch of images

If you feel your brain is in need of a bit of a workout, why not have a go at this issue's Readers' Challenge? This regular competition is designed to set those cogs turning and stretch your Photoshop skills into new realms. The challenge is simple – just download these sample images from the CD and set to work at creating your unique masterpiece. Your creation must include at least one of the images shown here – our only other request is that you have fun in the process.

Every issue we're amazed to discover what you creative cats come up with using our random bunch of images, and we can't wait to see what you do with these latest ones. We want to see everyone have a go this issue, so whatever your level of Photoshop expertise, get cracking and show us what you can come up with!

HOW TO ENTER

Access the Readers' Challenge folder from the side panel on our CD and copy it to your desktop. Once you've completed your masterpiece, send it to us on a CD along with your name, address and a few words about your creation, to:

Readers' Challenge
Photoshop Creative
Imagine Publishing
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset, UK
BH2 6EZ

NOTES | IF YOUR ENTRY IS UNDER 2MB, YOU CAN EMAIL IT TO US AT **PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK**. UNFORTUNATELY WE CAN'T RETURN CDS

Create Vintage Postcards
POST CARD
Post Card.
THIS SIDE FOR ADDRESS
Hey! We
here! Hav
time on
See you soo
love, Robe